

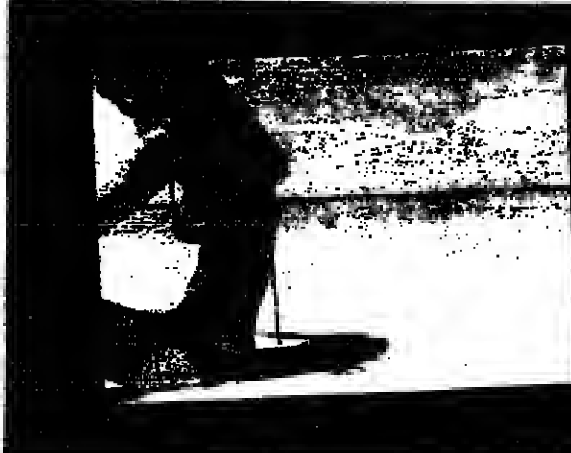


# THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,815

SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 1999

(IR80p) 70p



IN THE MAGAZINE  
**THE GREAT ESCAPE:  
HOLIDAYS FOR MIND,  
BODY AND SPIRIT**

IN THE REVIEW

**ROD: D'YA  
THINK I'M  
STILL SEXY**

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## Ditch Ashdown, ministers tell Blair

TONY BLAIR is facing a rebellion by the Cabinet's three "heavy-hitters" over Labour's close links with the Liberal Democrats in a move that puts a new question mark over the future of Paddy Ashdown.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor and Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, are to join forces in an attempt to prevent Mr Blair calling a referendum on electoral reform before the next general election.

Mr Brown's opposition could hamper Mr Blair's attempts to

BY ANDREW GRICE  
AND COLIN BROWN  
in Cape Town

put on a united front with his Chancellor after faction-fighting between their respective allies was blamed for the resignations of two senior ministers - Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson - and Charlie Whelan, Mr Brown's press secretary.

A source close to Mr Brown said: "He doesn't understand why we need to offer the Lib Dems proportional representation (PR). He believes first-

past-the-post is a better, more clear-cut system."

Mr Brown, Mr Prescott and Mr Straw are increasingly confident of blocking a referendum since the departure of Mr Mandelson, who was the Cabinet's strongest supporter of closer Lib-Lab relations.

Sources close to Mr Blair conceded yesterday that an early referendum was "less likely" but insisted the Prime Minister could still call one before the next election if he felt he could win public support for a new voting system for Westminster.

Mr Blair insisted this week that links with the Liberal Democrats would "intensify" but senior ministers claim he is in a clear minority in his own Cabinet. "The balance of forces on this issue has changed considerably," said one.

Mr Ashdown, already under fire in his own party for "cosying up" to Mr Blair, is bracing himself for further criticism as the prospect of a referendum recedes.

Although the Liberal Democrat leader's critics will not move against him in the run-up

to elections to local authorities, the Scottish and Welsh assemblies and the European Parliament this spring, he will face a showdown over Lib-Lab relations at his party's conference in Harrogate in September.

There could be moves to replace Mr Ashdown with a leader less keen on close links with Mr Blair, such as Charles Kennedy, the agriculture spokesman, or Simon Hughes, the health spokesman.

Last night, Mr Ashdown's allies doubted that his opponents would force a leadership contest

and said he would not consider standing down until after the next general election. "He doesn't think there is a successor yet; he is still enjoying things and achieving things," said one.

In a further blow to Mr Ashdown, opposition to electoral reform inside the Labour Party has forced Mr Blair to put off a decision on the issue until autumn 2000, further reducing the prospect of a referendum before the next election, expected in 2001.

Supporters of reform had hoped that the Labour confer-

ence in October this year would decide on plans by a commission headed by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, which recommended a watered-down form of PR called the "alternative vote plus".

The Prime Minister said the Jenkins report made "a well-argued and powerful case" but has put off a decision in the hope of winning over hostile Labour activists and MPs. "The driving force for closer Lib Dem links was not Peter Mandelson; it was Tony Blair," one Blair aide said last night.

A defiant Mr Blair declared

there would be no turning back from Labour's "third way" policies and rejected a return to old Labour policies.

Speaking in Cape Town as he completed his three-day trip to South Africa, he said: "The answer to all the world's ills can't be to spend more public money or run the public sector in the same old way," he said. "The new centre and centre-left in politics has to create its own constituency among the people." Mondeo man wavers, page 8; Under fire, page 14; Leading article, Review, page 3

## Britons in Yemen jail shot, claim families

TWO OF the five British men being detained in Yemen in connection with terrorist charges have been shot while in prison, lawyers acting for them said yesterday.

But the claims were discounted by British officials who have been in contact with the Yemeni Interior Minister and the Head of Security for Aden. The Foreign Office said it had not had any consular access to the men by last night however, amid growing anxiety about them.

An earlier claim that all the men have been tortured by the Yemeni authorities was also repeated by the men's families.

Mr Rashad Yaqoob, of the Association of Moslem Lawyers, said that the mother of one of the men had been told by a prison source that two of them had been shot at. "We have information that the family of Malik Nassar Harhara received a phone call from a person with a link in the Yemen prison, but as of yet the extent of the injuries is unknown," he said. "Lawyers helping me in Aden have told me that all the prisoners have suffered inhuman treatment."

It was also revealed that the five men had all travelled separately to the Yemen last month, and did not know each other. They are Mohsin Ghalsin, 18; Shahid Butt, 33; Malik Nassar Harhara, 28; Samad Ahmed, 21 and Ghulain Hussein, 25, all from Birmingham. They are

BY JOHN DAVISON

being held with Lebourdice Pierick James, 30, from France.

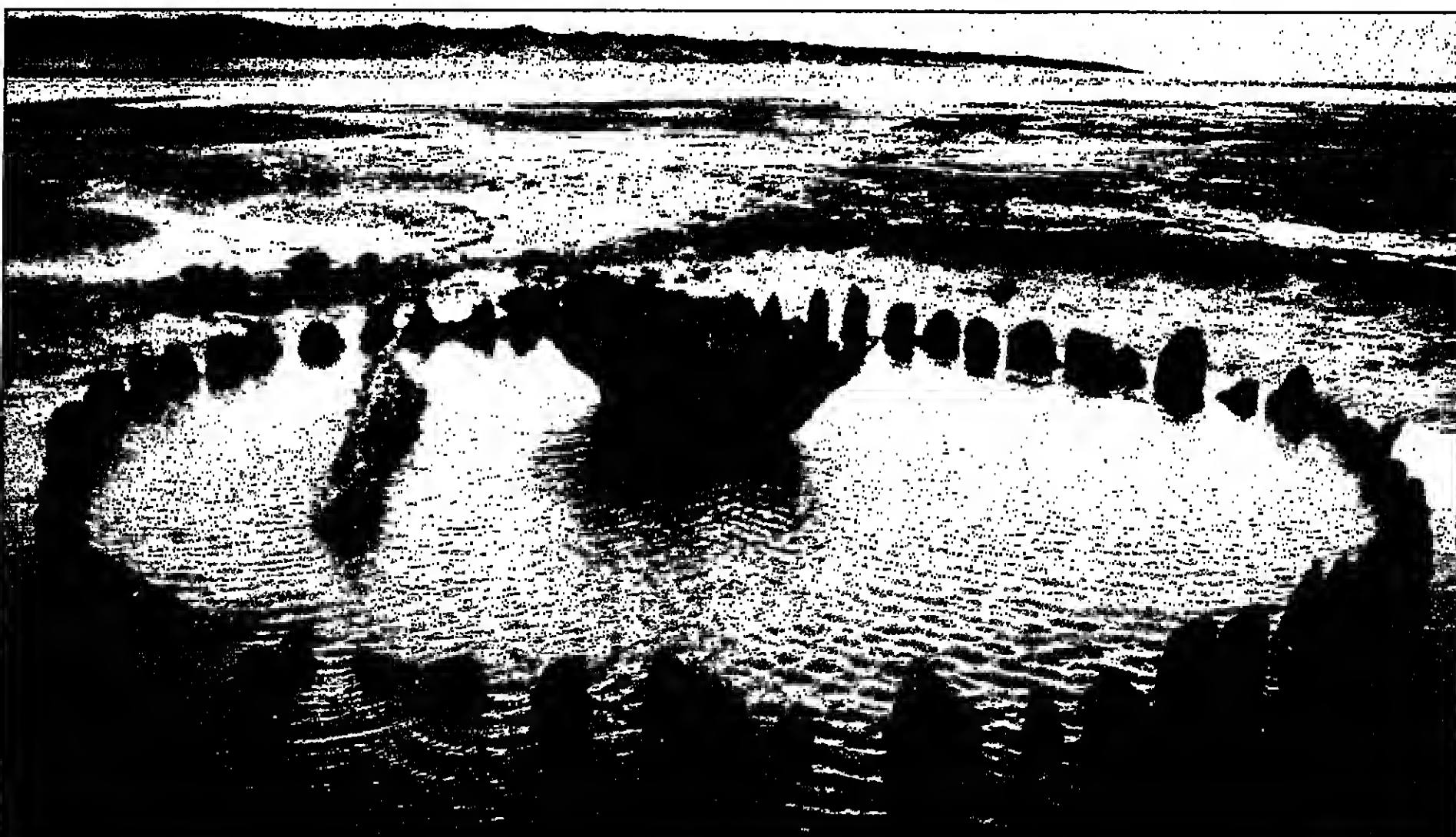
The Yemeni authorities have said that the men were part of the Islamic extremist group responsible for the kidnap of 16 Westerners last month, and that they had been planning terrorist attacks. Kidnappers from the militant group Al Jihad took 16 western hostages on December 28, and four were killed in a rescue attempt the next day. The Yemenis have claimed that the kidnappers were demanding the release of the arrested men.

The Yemeni Embassy in London said that the men had been arrested on 24 December and claimed they were "planning to carry out terrorist acts in the country prior to the Abyan kidnapping". The British consul general in Aden David Pearce said of the shooting claims: "I am as confident as I can be that this report is not correct."

Families of the men yesterday pleaded with the Yemen government to release them, amid fears that the men could be tried and executed as soon as this weekend, although it was thought a trial would not be held during Ramadan, which has over a week to run.

The relatives deny that any of the men have done anything wrong and are planning a demonstration in London.

## Shifting sands yield 'Stonehenge of the sea'



The mysterious 'tree temple' on the north Norfolk coast. Unless action is taken the 4,000-year-old circle may disappear for ever Mark Brennan/Norfolk Archaeology Unit

IT IS one of the earliest and most mysterious ancient monuments discovered in Britain.

A massive oak tree, stuck into the ground upside down with its roots, "like a table with legs", says Dr Francis Pryor, president of the Council for British Archaeology. He believes it is very likely to have been some form of altar.

The site, on the lonely coast at Holme-next-the-Sea near Fimstanton, is almost certainly a ritual and probably to do with

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY  
Environment Correspondent

death. Within its oval ring of 54 posts is the inverted oak tree with its roots, "like a table with legs", says Dr Francis Pryor, president of the Council for British Archaeology. He believes it is very likely to have been some form of altar.

The tree-temple - if that is what it is - has been uncovered by tidal erosion. It is thought to have been constructed in the early Bronze Age, between

2,000 and 1,200 BC, which would make it almost a contemporary of Stonehenge.

The site, says Dr Pryor, is the most extraordinary archaeological discovery he has ever seen and it must be preserved.

However, unless difficult decisions are taken soon about preserving it, it is likely to be destroyed by the action of the tides within two years. No decision can be made until the site

is precisely dated. Carbon-

dating of the wood is being carried out.

An excavation led by Mark Brennan of Norfolk County Council's Archaeology Unit suggests that the tree-temple was constructed on swampy ground some way inland, which the sea covered at a later date.

Mr Brennan believes the purpose of the site was probably excarnation - the practice

of exposing the bodies of the dead so that the flesh rotted more quickly, thus, it was thought, speeding the spirit on its way to the afterlife.

Dr Pryor added that for our ancestors oak was a special wood: "The inverted oak is not just utilitarian, a simple way of making an altar. It is a very complex symbolic statement. Perhaps a little sinister. It is the world turned upside down."

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THE FRIDAY REVIEW  
The Independent 9 January 1999







# THE FIVE TRIBES OF CONSERVATIVE WOMEN



**SUBURBAN QUEEN**

**Dame Jill Knight**  
Quintessential Edgbaston Tory madame. Hyacinth Bucket loves her! Big hair, big eyes, big dresses, and very big on loyalty. Paid-up member of hang 'em and flog 'em and heavily involved in Townswomen's Guilds. Uncompromising views. Enthusiast of tapestry.



**LOUD AND PROUD**

**Teresa Gorman**  
Libertarian. Bitter woman to the core. Wants out of Europe now, if not sooner, and wrote a book called 'Bastards' that was all about Europe but could have been about men. Extreme believer in HRT and loud jackets. Knocked 10 years off her age to get selected.



**THE MATRON**

**Ann Widdecombe**  
Hattie Jacques of the Tories. The woman who assassinated Michael Howard by saying he had "something of the night" about him. Good sport, superb speaker, fervent anti-abortionist. Spends her spare time researching Charles II's escape. Has risen above Doris Karloff taunts.



**LADY BOUNTIFUL**

**Virginia Bottomley**  
Former psychiatric social worker turned politician. The caring, if bland, face of the Tories but was too robotic on TV for her own good. Very Marks & Spencer and fragrant too. From grand old family whose members believe in public service above all.



**HAGUE BABE**

**Julie Kirkbride**  
Young, working-class and a true believer in the Portillo way. Only a few years ago was just another journalist in a black leather skirt. Married to Northern Ireland spokesman Andrew Mackay. Tipped to go all the way to the middle.

## Wanted: ambitious women for safe Tory seats; blue rinses needn't apply

BLAIR HAS his 101 "Babes", Hague only has 14. The Tories have suddenly decided this is not good enough.

William Hague has said that he wants to change all this, and yesterday it was reported that the party has set a secret target of putting up 250 female candidates to fight the next general election.

Central Office denies there is a quota but Roger Freeman, who is overseeing candidate selection, says he hopes to recruit an array of high-calibre women who will prove irresistible to the selection panel. A lot of high-calibre women will say that the selection panels found them mysteriously easy to resist but wish him well anyway.

Everyone says that in the Labour Party the men discrim-

BY ANN TRENEMAN

inate against the women, but in the Tory party it is the women who do the discriminating. Not the voters, but those who sit on the selection committees.

"It was just plain old-fashioned jealousy!" says one MP. These Tory women are not so much true blue as blue rinse and they have had little to offer their party but time. So why would they want a young thrusting female MP? Why take a chance on all those hormones when you could get a nice bar-ter in a pin stripe with two children and a wife?

Not that most Tory women would tell you that on the record. But then Tory women do not tend to go on the record about such things.

"I've been to so many meetings at Tory party conferences on women and no one talks during the proceedings. On the whole, I think Tory women are quite well-behaved," says Mary Ann Stephenson, of the Fawcett Society.

But, after the meetings, it all spills out. "They just say they've been trying for the past 28 years and they keep going to training courses and having their hair done and buying the right suits and they still don't get selected."

The whole subject of women MPs makes Edwina Currie laugh. "People do say it is the women who hold other women back with the Tories, but I think the whole party is stuck in a 1960s time warp."

"There is no heartfelt wish

to have MPs who reflect the country as a whole. That would mean talking about gay MPs or black MPs. Instead they are still talking about women. There has been women's liberation since the Sixties. The Tory party, bless their cotton socks, have just caught up."

A study by the Tory think-tank, the Bow Group, has found that barely 3 per cent of party members are women aged under 45.

Fiona Buxton, deputy chairman of the Bow Group, says the average age of members is 67. Bea Campbell, the author of *Iron Ladies*, calls it a "generational catastrophe".

Linda McDougall, author of *Westminster Women* and wife of the Labour MP Austin Mitchell, says that the Conser-

vatives should see this as an opportunity to change forever the view that they see women only as wives, grannies or nannies.

"William Hague could make a wholesale change in the thinking," she says. Now, women are selected only in extreme circumstances. "When there is sleaze or scandal, they turn to a woman," she says, pointing out that Jacqui Lait replaced Piers Merchant.

Obviously this is not the most sensible way to go about increasing the number of women MPs. Labour achieved its great leap forward with all-women shortlists, subsequently abandoned as illegal. Many say that without such drastic measures the Tories will never make an impact.

There is not a party in Eu-

rope with a significant number of women in its parliament that has not used quotas. But even the word is enough to make many Tories see red.

"Every woman in Parliament should be able to look every man in the eye and say that she got there the same way that he did," says the leading Tory MP Ann Widdecombe.

The leadership wants to fudge this, however. Mr Hague has proposed that 25 per cent of the candidates interviewed in the first round of Westminster selections should be women. The party rejected that, but it could change.

The Tory MP Julie Kirkbride is young and thrusting and believes that women should make up half of every shortlist. Others, like the former

Tory adviser, Sheila Gunn, are now coming round to this way of thinking. "One talented woman friend searched for a winnable seat for more than 20 years. At first she was told that she was too young, that she had a young family and so couldn't devote herself fully to the job and, then, that she was too old at over 40," she wrote in the *Spectator* last year. "It would be unforgivable for her daughters to suffer the same fate."

Miss Widdecombe does not believe it will. She says her heart used to sink when she saw a mostly female selection panel, but those days are gone. "We must not go down the route of positive discrimination. I'm not very impressed with most of 'Blair's Babes'. They get their pagers out before they even

begin to speak. Not all of them, but many of those who came in because of discrimination are very substandard."

This dislike of the Babes seems to cross most divides. Bea Campbell says the Tories should see this as a great opportunity now that Labour has failed on women.

"The Baroess Jays of this world hate what they call Seventies feminism - simple things like equal pay - and the coterie around Blair are deeply misogynist. They are short-haired, stiff, young centrions who feel very safe in an environment where they don't have to carry the burden of women and what matters to them."

Over to you, Mr Hague.   
Leading Article,   
Review, page 3

## 'Men never said to your face they didn't want you'

BY LOUISE JURY

THE DOUBTS were rarely raised in public. It was only afterwards that they trickled back to the prospective Tory woman candidate, one recalled yesterday.

"Nothing was ever specifically stated," Tessa Keswick said. "It's not easy to identify where the hostility comes in. You used to hear more afterwards about the opinions they never actually said - that they didn't want a woman."

Mrs Keswick, now director of the Centre for Policy Studies, a centre-right policy think-tank, first tried to get elected in 1987 and was eventually allowed to fight a completely unwinnable seat. In 1992 she tried again but was not even selected. After that she gave up.

She remembers aggressive questioning in interviews, although she concedes that men probably endured equally aggressive grillings - though possibly on different subjects.

"Why aren't you wearing a wedding ring?" they asked me once. I was married, but just didn't have the ring on."

There was no doubt men had the upper hand. "If they had to



Tessa Keswick: 'It was the men who were the pets'

choose, they would rather have a man. They'd appoint a male chairman in a ward because he was a banker without even knowing him. I guess it was rather the same [with MPs]. If the CV is good enough, and the smile, they like the man. But it was not stated."

With a background in advertising and business, a smattering of journalism and service

as a local councillor, Tessa Keswick had a reasonable CV of her own. "But I think you had to be extremely good, you just had to be that much better to be selected. Judith Chaplin - who was a trained economist - was, but she had about eight cabinet ministers ringing up for her."

Mrs Keswick said she had received no help at all from Tory

Central Office, although she had the impression that that position had since improved. "It was men who were the pets, who were pushed by the [constituency] chairmen."

Female solidarity was largely non-existent out there in the Tory shires and boroughs. "The women were deeply suspicious of other women. They love the young men."

Mrs Keswick said there was no point in appointing women who were not up to the job, and she feared that many potentially good candidates currently saw standing for the Conservatives as a bad career move.

But it was vital for the future of the Conservative Party that the party understood the difference that more women would make. "Without them, the Conservative Party is going to shrivel."

The positions she met have convinced Mrs Keswick that words are not enough. "I think it will take 30 years to get more women at this rate," she said. "Women MPs are just so important. They have got to feel that, instead of looking at them with pursed lips as if they had sucked on a lemon."

## Marrieds becoming minority

MARRIED PEOPLE will be in the minority for the first time in recorded memory if current trends continue over the next 10 years, government experts predicted yesterday.

The percentage of married adults is expected to fall to 48 per cent by 2011 and still further, to 45 per cent, by 2021, according to the Government Actuary Department. At present, married people make up 55 per cent of the population in England and Wales.

Couples who co-habit are likely almost to double in num-

BY CLARE GARNER

ber - from 1.56 million in 1996 to about 3 million in 2021. But despite the dramatic rise, there will still be fewer people living as couples - married or unmarried - in the first quarter of the 21st century.

The Government's figures are based on the assumption that trends such as the fall in the marital rate for under 30-year-olds, the rise in the proportion of single (never married) people who co-habit, and the small increase in the di-

vorice rate, will continue at the same rate.

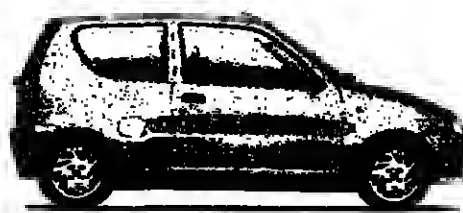
The proportion of men who have never married is expected to rise from 32 per cent in 1996 to 41 per cent in 2021. For women, the figure is expected to rise from 24 per cent to 33 per cent over the same period.

A spokesman for the Church of England insisted last night that the decline in marriage was not a foregone conclusion. "If there is a downward trend, the question is, how long will it go on? Life is often cyclical... The church will continue to

teach that marriage is the best way to cement a relationship and bring up children."

Divorce is likely to fall among younger age groups, but rise among the over-45s. The overall number of divorces among adults will rise from 8.55 per cent of all adults in 1996 to 11 per cent in 2021. Projected improvements in mortality mean the proportion of people who are widowed is to fall. It is expected that the number of widowed females over 65 will drop from 49 per cent in 1996 to 35 per cent in 2021.

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Health crisis: Staff speak of demoralisingly poor pay as one of Britain's top doctors resigns over bed shortages

# Dobson backs a new deal for nurses

FRANK DOBSON placed his weight behind nurses' claims for higher pay yesterday as he condemned as an "international disgrace" the recruitment of foreign nurses from abroad to shore up the ailing National Health Service.

The Secretary of State for Health said he wanted to see better pay, more flexible shifts, family-friendly employment policies and a new pay structure to make nursing a more attractive career and help to end the prac-

BY JEREMY LAURANCE  
Health Editor

tice of hospitals recruiting overseas. With the nurses' pay review body due to report later this month, he said he hoped its recommendations would be "sufficiently high" to attract and retain nurses. He also said he hoped the pay award would not be staged, as it was last year.

His remarks came as nurses from the Philippines tried on their NHS uniforms after being

flown in for jobs they said paid three times better than at home. Meanwhile, hospitals in Portsmouth appealed to patients' relatives to help out because of staff shortages.

The British Association for Accident and Emergency Medicine said yesterday that the drive to cut waiting lists was diverting resources from emergency care and had led to the shortage of beds. It is demanding a meeting with Mr Dobson.

Dr Roger Evans, president of the association and a consultant in Cardiff, said the situation was worse this winter because of the emphasis on treating patients for routine surgery. "That means there isn't room for emergencies. We have patients on trolleys in the department for six, eight, or ten hours at a time so it looks as if we are not performing when it is just because we can't move the patients on to a bed."

Yesterday, the pressures that threatened to overwhelm the

NHS earlier in the week appeared to be easing. The health department said 23 intensive-care units had beds available, and doctors predicted the flu outbreak could have peaked and be on the way down in the northern and central regions.

Mr Dobson said that some overstretched hospitals were facing "real problems" in dealing with staff shortages and high demand for beds. He did not criticise managers for seeking staff abroad but said: "It is an in-

ternational disgrace... [developed countries] talk about how much medical aid and assistance they are giving to the Third World and all over the developing world we are taking nurses and doctors away from them."

Speaking on BBC Radio he said the blame for nursing shortages lay with the Tories. "At the beginning of this decade there were about 15,000 nurses going into training each year. The previous government reduced it to 11,000. It takes

three years to train a nurse so the reduced number coming out of nurse training now is a product of the reduction they deliberately made at that time."

There are more than 8,000 vacancies for nursing staff in the NHS and 15,500 nurses are in training - the highest figure for six years according to Labour.

The Tory health spokeswoman, Ann Widdecombe, hit back at Mr Dobson's allegations that the Conservatives were to blame for the nursing crisis.

"Labour are fiddling the facts to wriggle out of their NHS crisis. They refuse to admit that their obsession with the waiting list figures and distorting clinical priorities has been the real cause of patients waiting for hours on trolleys in hospital corridors, and the spectacle of refrigerated lorries being used as temporary mortuaries," she said.

"They actually cut back our planned increase in trainee nurses for 1997-98 by 3 per cent, from 14 per cent to 11 per cent."

## 'You don't get respect or money'

GRADUATING NURSES expressed their hopes and fears for the future yesterday, with most of them disappointed at prospects for their profession.

Some had taken time out from their careers to requalify or take advance qualifications; they spoke at a ceremony at Homerton College, Cambridge.

Katie Chapman, 25, an auxiliary nurse at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, was receiving her higher-education diploma.

The qualification will raise her status to staff nurse and her pay from £7,500 to £12,800. "I am pessimistic for the future. At the moment it's very disheartening. You are working your hardest but not getting any respect or money. There is the bed crisis but if a bed is empty they say put someone in it, but there are not the people to care for them. It's dangerous."

Phil McMenamy, 35, a former engineer who came into nursing three-and-a-half years ago and who is now a psychiatric charge nurse in an adolescent unit at St Albans, said: "I think nursing is becoming more professional... But... we use bank and agency nurses because we can't fill the posts when they become vacant. This isn't good enough."

Gayle Jenkins, 45, had been in nursing for many years and works with cancer patients at the West Suffolk Hospital in Bury St Edmunds. She had taken a diploma in palliative care. She said: "The number of nurses coming from school has dropped drastically. They can go into other jobs such as computing which will pay them far more."

Mary Ferguson, 42, works at the Rosie Maternity Hospital in Cambridge as a midwife and took a diploma in midwifery, although she already had years of experience.

"You have the young ones coming up and you have to keep

BY CATHY COMERFORD

up. We are terribly short staffed... but I love the job," she said.

Helen Ellerton, 46, has been in nursing for 25 years and works at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. She progressed from enrolled to state registered nurse and took time out to take the three-year diploma. "It's just for professional satisfaction... I wish they would recognise nurses a little bit more," she said.

Nicola Hewes, 26, is a qualified registered general nurse and requalified to specialise in children's nursing. She works in the accident and emergency department at Addenbrooke's. "It's very stressful in A&E because we don't have any beds. I don't think the situation is going to improve because young people are going to go to University and will want to make shedloads of money at the end of it. There's a terrible lack of children's nurses in A&E."

Rachel Baker, 26, works on a children's ward at Peterborough District Hospital. She said: "We work so hard. I became ill because I was so tired. The more nurses that get qualified, the easier it will get. If the pay was enough more people would come into it."

Carole Crowson, 49, has been a state registered nurse since 1971. She manages an endoscopy unit at Peterborough District Hospital.

She said: "A lot of my age group are retiring and that has caused the problem but within the next three to four years, with Project 2000 [a graduate training scheme for nurses], the situation will improve."

Jo Simpson, 50, had taken a diploma in palliative care over three years as a modular course. She has been nursing for 28 years. "We have had lots of changes. I expect there will be some more. I certainly hope so."



Some of the 140 nurses who received higher-education diplomas at a graduation ceremony yesterday at Homerton College, Cambridge

Brian Harris

## Head of casualty unit quits in protest

ONE OF Britain's most respected hospital doctors has resigned as the head of Scotland's busiest accident and emergency department because of the shortage of beds.

The resignation of Keith Little, a blunt Yorkshireman, as clinical director of the unit at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary has shaken the complacency in Scotland that although NHS hospitals are under pressure, the problems are not nearly as bad as in England.

Dr Little said he accepted there was no "bottomless pit" of money available but maintained that the needs of patients were not being met by resources. He cited examples of patients waiting on trolleys for up to 10 hours. "It is no use struggling to find a bed two hours after a patient arrives. Empty beds must be available when they are needed," he said yesterday.

Dr Little tendered his resignation early in December before the winter crisis. He will continue to work as a consultant in the hospital's A&E department.

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN  
Scotland Correspondent

by health service workers at the Edinburgh hospital and by the Scottish National Party. Earlier this week Mr Galbraith, a former neurosurgeon, committed the cardinal ministerial error of saying there was "no crisis".

Dr Little said he accepted there was no "bottomless pit" of money available but maintained that the needs of patients were not being met by resources. He cited examples of patients waiting on trolleys for up to 10 hours. "It is no use struggling to find a bed two hours after a patient arrives. Empty beds must be available when they are needed," he said yesterday.

Dr Little said he was forthright in warning Tory and Labour ministers about mounting pressure on health ser-

vices in Scotland. "Staff [at the ERI] are working extremely hard, but they have to have their problems recognised and not denied by anyone," he said in a rebuke to Mr Galbraith.

"The people in power have to recognise there is a problem, a difficulty, which is not an exaggeration or make-believe, otherwise staff will become worn down and disillusioned."

He spoke of the "frustration" of having patients waiting on trolleys for "four, six or eight hours" or even "in extreme cases" up to 10 hours, before being found a bed. Tracing the problems back to May last year, he said the underlying cause was a more elderly population combined with bed closures.

"Somehow those in charge have to identify a structure and a strategy which enable acute hospitals like this to have empty beds available to deal with emergency patients on a daily basis."

Mr Galbraith's trenchant denial of any crisis followed a claim by Dr Brian Potter, Scottish secretary of the British Medical Association, that the NHS was in "an unbelievably awful state". Admissions at the ERI's accident and emergency

department surged on Monday, with staff struggling to cope with 188 patients in 10 hours. At the time, Mr Galbraith responded: "The NHS is not in crisis. The message is, we are very busy, but we are coping."

Mr Galbraith remained insistent yesterday that there was "no crisis" and said that no one in the NHS had been gagged. Admitting that Dr Little's resignation was "not helpful", the minister said: "I am sorry that Keith has given up his managerial post... We are not too far apart."

A long-term solution was in place with extra money, but it was "frustrating" waiting for it to take effect.

Dr Little said he was not aware that the position was as serious elsewhere in Scotland. "Certainly my colleagues down south, at a meeting I was at in London [on Thursday]... everyone has major difficulties in processing patients through the emergency services."

Dr Potter said he was not surprised by Dr Little's reasons for resigning. "It is a natural consequence if you keep putting people in a position where they have to cope with intolerable odds." He blamed the private finance initiative, adopted by Labour from Conservatives, for "ripping the heart out of the NHS".

Joe Owens, chief executive of the hospital, claimed measures had been put in place to tackle acute bed availability but these would "take time". Tom Waterson, Unison representative at the hospital, said Mr Galbraith should change his policies or go. "There is massive pressure and massive frustration because there is just too much work and not enough staff - we are hunching from crisis to crisis." Alex Salmond, leader of the SNP, said the minister's position was untenable.



Dr Little: Needs of A&E patients 'not being met'

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£50,000+	5.45	5.15	4.12	5.20	5.08	4.90
£25,000+	5.20	4.80	3.84	4.95	4.84	4.55
£10,000+	4.90	4.40	3.52	4.65	4.55	4.15

	Annual			Monthly		
	Previous	New	Net %	Previous	New	Net %
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£10,000+	4.40	4.15	3.32	3.40	3.35	3.15
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	AER/Gross %			AER/Gross %		
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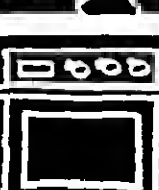
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# A twisted view of man and his place

WHICH IS the most provincial city in Britain? Or, to put it more precisely, the inhabitants of which city in Britain know least about any other city or place in Britain? My money would be on London. This is not a particularly new thought, but it came out for another spin on its bike on Wednesday when the front-page of *The Independent* advertised Deborah Orr's fine new column inside the paper - that day about Scottish land reform - with the words: *Haway the lairds*.

A puzzle. The piece was about Scotland. "Haway" is a Tyneside expression of encouragement, the traditional shout of football crowds to Newcastle United players ("Haway the lads, come on boys!"), and unknown north of the Tweed. Even as a piece of world-play immune from geography and dialect, it did not make much sense. Ms Orr's piece was an anti-laird cry from the opposite terraces ("Stick it to those feudal superiors, break their legs!").

At lunch that day, dipping bread into the olive oil, I was grumbling about this metropolitan solecism - grumbling mildly, pedantically and I have no doubt irritatingly - to three colleagues from the Granta office (in London), when the subject changed to Peter Mandelson, as it often does, and how many houses you could buy in Mr Mandelson's Hartlepool constituency for the price of his own in Notting Hill. I wondered if we were all quite sure where Hartlepool was.

Nobody knew. "Up north" was the closest they could get. But west coast, east coast, somewhere in the middle?

Nobody knew. North or south of Newcastle, east or west of Manchester, north or south of York?

Nobody knew. Well, have a guess then. Only one taker for this: "I always imagined it was near Liverpool."

My colleagues are clever people, endowed with curiosity, educated at England's most ancient universities, and much more knowledgeable than I am about many things. The structuralism of Roland Barthes, the complete works of

## NOTEBOOK



IAN JACK

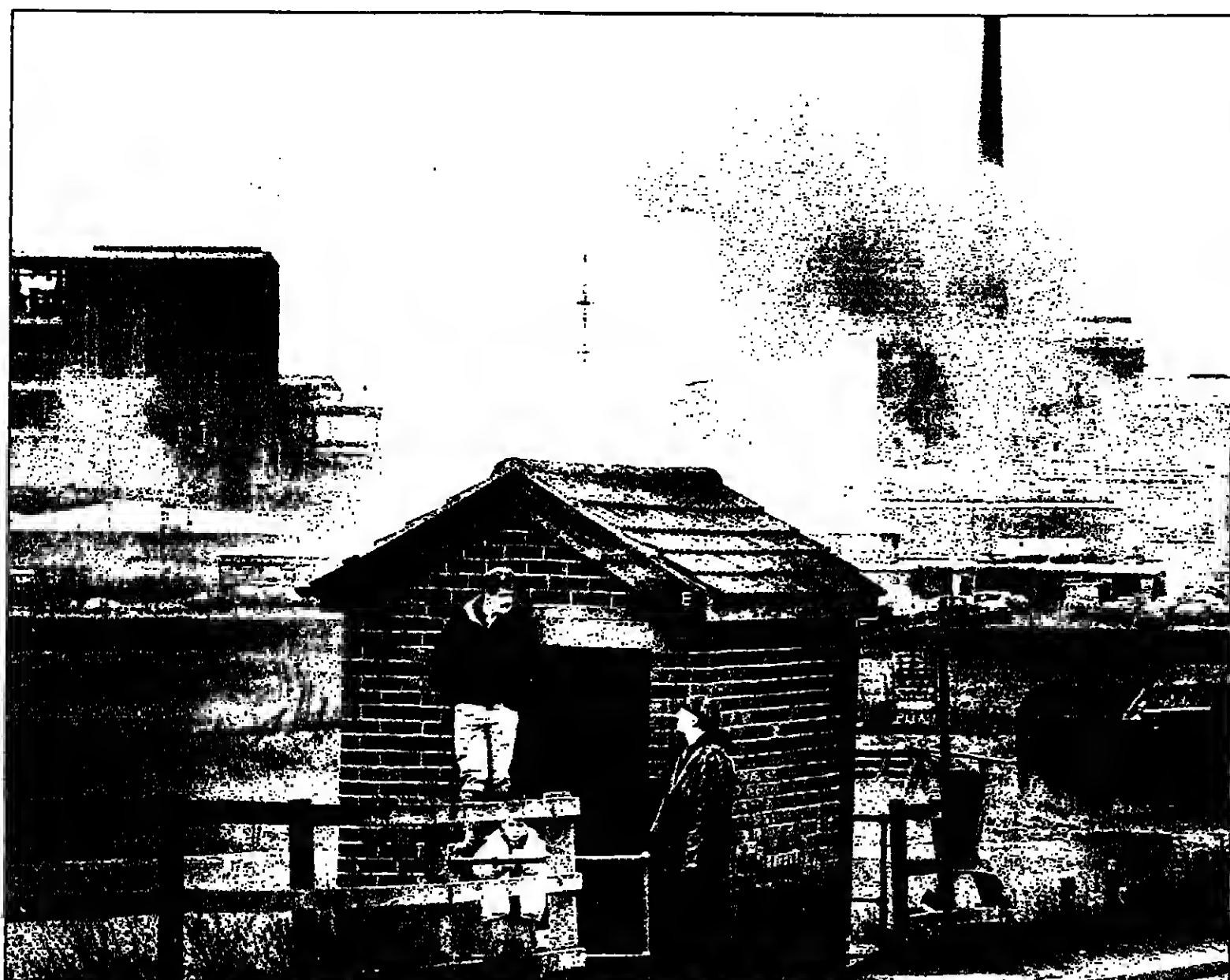
George Eliot, the American musical, the Russian novel - they could give me a hiding in any of these. But they were all raised south of the Wash. "The North" to them was a mist that fell over the country somewhere about Milton Keynes and receded only on the approach to Iceland.

The spatial relationship of Sheffield to Leeds, Inverness to Aberdeen, Newcastle to Middlesbrough, all were as mysterious to them as the source of the Nile would have been to a European explorer circa 1850.

Is there a reverse ignorance? I do not think so. If you grow up in the North, you learn about the South for all kinds of reasons. London is there, the newspapers and television come from there, it is the place between you and continental Europe. You need often to go to it or through it. You cannot escape it.

There are compensations, though, for coming from the mist of which a well-founded smugness about southern provinciality is certainly one. Northern readers with southern partners, friends and colleagues may like to reaffirm their superiority with the help of a blank sketch of Britain. Ask them if they can take their pens and mark the location of Hartlepool, and also Barrow, Jarrow and Dundee.

I wish I could offer a prize for the closest results, a sort of spot-the-northern-ball competition. Instead, bow about this. Name the authors of *The Man from the North*, *North and South*, *Northward Ho*, *Our Friends in the North*, *All Points North*. The first reader's letter which does this successfully wins for its writer a second-class return to the Mandelson constituency and a



Hartlepool: 'When the subject changed to Mr Mandelson's constituency... "Up north" was the closest anyone could get' Ted Ditchburn

handshake with the Member himself, if you can find him there (Oh, all right, a bottle of Scotch).

THIS WEEK, more than 20 years after his death, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein was "revealed" as an imperialist and racist. In 1947, the field marshal made a two-month tour of Africa and then submitted his Grand Design for the continent in a secret report to the prime minister, Clement Attlee, which was embarrassing to the government even at the time

and has just been released by the Public Record Office under the 50-year rule.

Montgomery wanted to perpetuate and strengthen white rule in Africa, to suppress communist-inspired independence movements, and to attract a new breed of energetic white settler to replace the indolent, over-servanted class who were already there.

The sentence in his report that has attracted most publicity runs: "There will be many people in the UK who will oppose such a plan on the grounds that the African will suffer; there is no reason

whatever why he should suffer; and in any case he is a complete savage and is quite incapable of developing the country himself."

According to some newspaper pieces, these thoughts have delivered a "body-blow" to Montgomery's public standing. Lord Chalfont, one of his biographers, thinks that his reputation has been "irredeemably damaged... I find it very disappointing and depressing".

This is surely wrong. Whatever his military skills, Montgomery was well known as an unpleasant man (as Lord Chal-

font concedes) and prone to what is now known as robust language, to show just what a robust little chap he was. But, more than that, do we really imagine that his views, perhaps couched a little more circumspectly, were so remarkably uncommon among men of his generation 50 years ago?

Montgomery was born in 1887. For at least the first half of his life, the superiority of the white race was a given, and, as an ideology, probably reached its peak during his adolescence. When Montgomery was 11, Rudyard Kipling was urg-

ing the United States to "pick up the white man's burden, send forth the best ye breed".

Even 40 years later, the idea that non-white colonies could successfully fend for themselves was still relatively rare. In 1941, a celebrated English writer wrote of India that without British protection and administration it was "hardly even capable of feeding itself"; that it depended on a framework of British technical experts who "could not be replaced within five or ten years"; that its old British administrators needed to be retired in favour of younger and

more energetic men (but still Britons). If Britain pulled out, this writer wrote, the result for India would simply be recolonisation by Germany, Russia or Japan and "a series of enormous famines which would kill millions of people within a few years".

The writer? George Orwell, in one of his most famous essays, "The Lion and the Unicorn". This is not to equate Orwell with Montgomery. Orwell believed that India should be offered independence, which it would wisely decline and opt instead for partnership in a new kind of equal empire.

Still, he did not get it right. India opted for full independence only six years later, and managed to run itself at least no less successfully than under British rule. And although he was correct about a future starvation - a great famine did come to Bengal two years later - the millions it killed died because of British rather than Japanese maladministration.

I HAVE a borrowed book at home that a friend bought recently from a second-hand shop. It contains magnificent photographic plates, which show the benign, progressive influence of Britain in every corner of the world.

Underneath a picture of some wigwags in Canada, the caption says: "Nothing but their [the natives'] inherent incapacity prevents their attaining complete equality with the white race. But the disability exists, and all that the most philanthropic can hope for the native races of America is their gentle diminution, followed by their peaceful extinction."

The book was published in 1895. Montgomery would have been eight. The true shock of the Montgomery disclosure is that it seems to have caused a shock at all. It betrays an alarming ahistorical notion of whom we have been and what many of our forefathers believed.

A JOKE just in by electronic mail from Delhi. Q: What do they call the Indian version of Viagra? A: The God of Small Things.

## 'One in six farms to go organic within decade'

ORGANIC FARMING is booming in Britain, with the acreage of land kept free of fertilisers and pesticides doubling in one year.

However, there is unlikely to be any decrease in the relatively high prices of organic foods for consumers - at least not for several years.

Dr Nic Lampkin, a leading British authority on organic farming, told a conference yesterday that one in six farms could be organic by 2010.

Conventional farming with chemicals was mixed in recession while the Government had boosted the payment it gives farmers to convert to organic methods from £250 per hectare to £450. At the same time, there was such a strong demand for

BY NICHOLAS SCHOON

organic foods that supermarkets had to import the bulk of what they sold from abroad.

Dr Lampkin said many farmers feared that as organic produce moves into the mainstream, it would no longer fetch premium prices. However, he believed it would continue to be relatively expensive for several years due to strong growth in demand.

Dr Lampkin, of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, said Britain, which has an estimated 1,500 organic farmers, now had one of the fastest growth rates of organic farming in Europe. Currently, one per cent of the total farm acreage is or-

ganic but over the next decade this could rise to 15 per cent.

Sales of produce across the European Union were worth about £4bn a year, Dr Lampkin told the National Conference on Organic Food and Farming in Cirencester, Glos.

Dr Jules Pretty of the University of Essex said that chemical-free farming could feed the globe's entire population of 10 billion people in the next century. His research, covering 63 developing nations, had found there were already 2 million farmers who had used organic techniques to at least double their crop production.

Many of them had abandoned the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides because

they could no longer afford them. Yet, from India to Brazil, they had still found ways of doubling or even tripling yields.

"We're no longer talking about techniques used experimentally," he said.

Dr Pretty, director of his university's Centre for Environment and Society, gave the example of the velvet bean, grown in maize fields in Honduras and Guatemala. The bean has raised maize yields from 800kg per hectare to two tonnes - approaching the yields obtained by intensive farming in Europe. The bean turns nitrogen in the air into nitrate fertiliser in the soil. Once fully grown, it is cut down and allowed to rot - making compost.

## IN BRIEF

### Meningitis alert for youth football

YOUNG FOOTBALLERS were warned yesterday not to share water bottles during games this weekend to cut the risk of spreading meningitis. Fear of the virus being spread by saliva in drinks bottles has prompted the GT Football League to issue the warning to its 450 teams in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

### Paedophile jailed for 15 years

A PAEDOPHILE who charmed the parents of his victims into trusting him was jailed for 15 years yesterday at the Old Bailey for abusing 10 boys over 20 years. Air-traffic controller Anthony Bridger, 52, who surfed the Internet for pornography, was caught when Surrey Police raided his home and seized computer equipment and printouts.

### Boys questioned on rape attempt

TWO BOYS aged 12 and another of 11 were questioned by police in connection with the alleged attempted rape of a girl aged six. The boys were arrested on Monday and released on police bail pending further inquiries. The alleged incident happened in south Reading, Berkshire.

### Teacher's murder appeal granted

THE DEPUTY headmaster jailed for life for murdering his foster daughter is to be allowed to appeal against his conviction. Sion Jenkins, 40, was convicted last July of bludgeoning Billie-Jo Jenkins, 13, at the family home in Hastings. No date has been set for the appeal.

### Heart monitors for BA planes

BRITISH AIRWAYS will become the first international airline to install heart monitors and cardiac resuscitation devices on all of its aircraft, it said yesterday. The airline plans to fit the first monitors on long-haul planes in April.

## Britain is e-mail capital of Europe

BRITONS SEND more e-mails to friends and colleagues than any other nation in Europe.

A survey has found that more than 50 per cent of UK Internet users keep in contact with their friends via e-mail compared with the European average of 34 per cent. Italians are the least keen on communicating electronically (18 per cent).

BMRB International, a market research company, asked 12,000 adults across Europe about their Internet habits. While Britons emerged as the most enthusiastic e-mail users, Scandinavians are the biggest users of the Net.

More than half of the Swedish

BY CLARE GARNER

population, nearly half of Finns and 46 per cent of Danes said they had used the Internet, compared with just under a third of the British population as a whole. In France and Belgium a quarter of the population had used the Net, and in Germany and Spain a fifth. The Italians came last, with only 19 per cent having used the world wide web.

For eight of the twelve countries surveyed, e-mailing was the most popular Net activity, beating banking, which itself is more popular than on-line shopping.

Leading article, Review page 3

## FERGAL KEANE



It is in the nature of war to throw up impossible choices

IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 3

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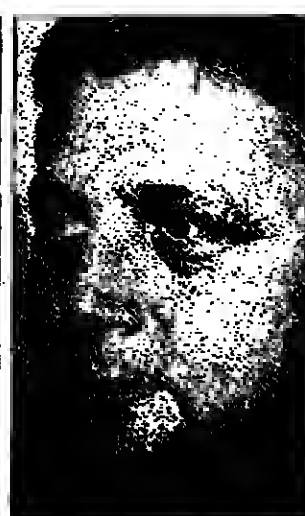


## 8/HOME NEWS

**Politics: After three weeks of government turmoil and division, The Independent revisits the voters of Middle England who deserted the Tories at the last election**



**Mark Redfern, 31, engineer.**  
Voted Labour.  
"I would not vote for anybody now. I voted for Blair because he seemed decent but now he has let me down. I never expected schools would be shut down under Labour. That is not what was promised during the election campaign."



**Andrew Osciak, 45, supervisor.**  
Voted Labour.  
"There is no leadership in the Tory party and you never hear of them. They seem irrelevant. There should be more consensus among parties so that the big problems facing the country can be dealt with properly. We want strong leadership."



**Susan Lovett, 41, housewife.**  
Voted Conservative.  
"Blair and his colleagues are power-mad and have made a fiasco out of being in government. The only good policy has been on Europe, because I agreed with Major's approach that we should wait and see whether we enter the single currency."



**Craig Coates, 40, clerk of works.**  
Voted Labour.  
"What happened to all their pledges on health and education? I am now very sceptical about politicians and have lost interest. Nothing significant has changed in this country since they have come into office."



**Roger Jones, 44, self-employed.**  
Voted Labour.  
"I will wait two, three years before I judge New Labour's record. It will take time to turn around health and education. It is a shame about the resignations ... but perhaps that has been part of British politics for the past 20 years."



**Lionel Baird, 54, a paramedic.**  
Voted Conservative.  
Mr Baird said that the "back-biting and knife stabbing" between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, has been the cause of a great deal of harm to the country at a time when the NHS was deteriorating."

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## Mondeoland turns against 'weak and divided' Labour

THE LABOUR PARTY faces an uphill struggle to hang on to the support of thousands of middle England voters who deserted the Conservatives and voted Tony Blair into power in 1997.

This week we returned to the west Midlands to see how voters in Redditch, Worcestershire - *The Independent's* general election panel of "Mondeo men and women" - felt about Mr Blair and his party at the end of three weeks of upheaval, resignation and division in the Government.

And the answer is not much. They are disillusioned, think that the Government is behaving no differently to the Tories and many would not vote Labour again.

Mark Redfern, 31, an engineer, is typical of the panel when he says he would not want to vote for anyone if there was a general election tomorrow because "politicians are just as bad as each other."

"They all have skeletons in their closet. Before the election Labour said we could trust them and they would be open and trustworthy."

"They're not as bad as the Tories but then Labour has only been in Government for a

BY SARAH SCHAEFER  
Political Reporter

year and a half and not 18 years. It makes them look weak and divided. Tony Blair has let me down," he said.

Mr Redfern, who describes himself as "one of Thatcher's children", is also disappointed with the present Government's record on education.

"My seven-year-old son Matthew's school may get closed down under a Labour government that chose education as one of their key pledges. So far, Tony Blair has not done anything that he promised."

When Mr Blair campaigned during the 1997 general election, his efforts were focused on the likes of Mr Redfern - a relatively small group of middle class, middle England voters, who had abandoned Labour as their natural party of choice.

He told how, in the 1992 general election, he had met a man on a Midlands housing estate washing his Ford Sierra who had become a Tory because he now owned his own house and was self-employed.

The man, he said, made Mr Blair realise that his party would never win power without

convincing the likes of the Sierra owner that Labour had changed. It was among people like him, who by 1997 were more likely to be driving Ford Mondeo's, that *The Independent* established its general election panel of disaffected Tory voters preparing to switch to Labour.

On 1 May 1997 a 34-year-old former teacher, Jacqui Smith, won Redditch for the Labour party with a majority of 6,125 and a swing from the Tories of more than 3 per cent. The seat had been 44th on Labour's target list. At the time, voters said they had switched to Labour because they "needed a change", but four of our twelve panelists "could not bring themselves to vote for Tony Blair in the end" and stuck with the Conservatives.

Linda Middleton, 42, who works in a supermarket, echoed Mr Redfern's concern about recent splits within the Government. "It is disgusting. Our livelihood is in their hands and they are preoccupied with bickering and arguing. They are hardly the people's party."

She also accuses Mr Blair of having reintroduced class hierarchy into the education

system by abolishing student grants. "He really does not care about ordinary folk but has taken all the help we had away from us."

Another switcher, Craig Coates, 30, a clerk of works, added: "I would not vote for anybody at the moment because politicians are in the game for what they can get for themselves. We want to hear more about health and education and are fed up with scandals."

There has been general discontent among the panelists with the decision to give the Bank of England independence, although their criticism was tempered by this week's renewed fall in interest rates.

However, none of those who switched to Labour blame the Government for the looming economic storm clouds. Roger Jones, 44, who was made redundant from his job as a goods invoice manager at Rover's Longbridge plant last October, said the present difficulties had been "inevitable".

"They have inherited a lot of problems from the Tories and it has been inevitable for several years that the British car industry would have the carpet pulled from underneath its

feet," Mr Jones, now self-employed said.

But while many of the panelists feel let down by the promises of a fresh start and more open government, none of them had considered going back to the Conservatives at the next election. Andrew Osciak, 45, a supervisor, summed up their view when he said the Tories had disappeared from the political radar. "There is no leadership in the present Tory party and you never hear of them, they seem irrelevant."

Approving of the increased co-operation between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, he added: "There should be more consensus among parties, perhaps even a coalition so that the big problems facing this country can be dealt with properly. We want strong leadership."

Those panelists who voted for the Tories in 1997 feel vindicated by the upheavals in the Government during recent weeks. Lionel Baird, 54, a paramedic, said the "back-biting and knife-stabbing" between Mr Blair and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, was harming the country at a time when the NHS was deteriorating.

Susan Lovett, 41, a house-

wife, argued that reports about leaks and spin-doctors showed how "power mad" Mr Blair and his colleagues were.

"This is not what those who voted for Tony Blair bargained for and Peter Mandelson's resignation may as well be the end of New Labour. They pretended to be different from the Tories but they are just the same and have not actually delivered on anything they set out to do."

But she added: "The Tories have completely lost their direction, the only party that offers proper opposition is the Liberal Democrats."

While she is more critical than she was of New Labour 18 months ago, Europe is one area where Mrs Lovett agrees with Mr Blair.

"The Government is right in that they want to wait and see on the single currency. The Conservatives still seem too divided over Europe and people don't have extreme views on the matter."

The message of the panel is clear. Mr Blair's New Labour has so far disappointed and another victory in Mondeoland is anything but guaranteed. The battle for the next general election has begun.

## The Big Mac Generation finds Tony lacks taste

BEFORE THE election, they were dubbed the Big Mac Generation, because when they were born in the late Seventies the ubiquitous hamburger had just started to appear on Britain's high streets.

Having grown up knowing life only under the Conservatives, they were first-time voters when Tony Blair won his historic landslide victory in May 1997.

At the time, many first-time voters in Redditch were undecided who they would vote for on polling day but a typical plea was that politicians should "stop arguing, try to agree more and offer something together."

The *Independent* went back to its election panel of young voters in the town to find out

BY SARAH SCHAEFER

whether their views on Westminster had changed. Four of the panelists, still living in the mid-Worcestershire constituency, voted Conservative, three did not vote and three supported Labour.

Michelle Oldfield, 20, a business student at Aston University, followed family tradition when she decided to vote for the Tories in 1997.

While she thinks Tony Blair is "very, very good", New Labour as a whole has failed to impress.

"The in-fighting of the past month is a great shame, because it seems that Tony Blair has not the complete backing of his Cabinet. He seems to be a bit of a one-man band at the mo-



**Paul Knell, 19, student.**  
Voted Liberal Democrat.  
"Tony Blair is a complete hypocrite. First he tells everyone all day long about the importance of education and then his children miss school because they are on holiday with him in the Seychelles. All we ever hear about is leaks and spin-doctors."



**Michelle Oldfield, 20, business student, Aston University.**  
Voted Conservative.  
"Tony Blair has not the complete backing of his Cabinet. I think a lot of people are still worried about the Labour Party and so far they have not done anything outstanding to change their minds."



**Rachel Putt, 20, a receptionist.**  
Voted Tory.  
She disliked "Cool Britannia" and invitations for pop groups such as Oasis to 10 Downing Street. "The whole idea was a flop. Tony Blair should stop trying to please young people, because it is quite nauseating and will not win any votes."

ment." Although most of the panelists are not personally affected by the Government's reform of higher education, they are unified in criticism of the abolition of student grants.

"My brother will have to pay £1,000 a year in tuition fees; it just does not seem fair that this Government is making education elitist," Ms Oldfield said.

Iain Farquhar, 19, a sports-science student at Edinburgh

University, who voted Labour, agreed. "There was no talk of tuition fees before the last general election, otherwise most young people would have never voted for them."

Nor is there much warmth for New Labour's rebranding of Cool Britannia and invitations for pop groups such as Oasis to 10 Downing Street.

Rachel Putt, 20, a receptionist, who voted Tory, said it

may have even dissuaded young people from voting for the party in future.

"The whole idea was a flop. Tony Blair should stop trying to please young people, because it is quite nauseating and will not win any votes."

The biggest disappointment among the panel has been the lack of any visible change by the Conservative Party since Labour came into office.

Richard Watson, 21, a humanities student at Glamorgan University, did not vote at the last election because he thought Mr Blair's proposals were no more than another version of the Tories' plans.

"It is sad that there has been no real difference in their policies and politicians are just arguing as they were before. They even have the same scandals as the Tories."

## Minister goes east to cut flow of refugees

THE IMMIGRATION minister, Mike O'Brien, will fly to Eastern Europe tomorrow for a series of urgent talks aimed at stemming the flow of gypsy asylum-seekers into Britain.

During a five-day tour of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, Mr O'Brien will urge the three Eastern European states to improve their records on race relations.

Britain believes that many of

BY IAN BURRELL  
Home Affairs Correspondent

the Roma refugees who have sought asylum over the past year have been the victims of discrimination in the countries they have fled.

But Mr O'Brien said that in almost all cases it had been decided they did not qualify for asylum under the Refugee Convention of 1951 because they

had not individually been the victims of persecution.

He said: "What we cannot do is have a situation where, because there is discrimination not being tackled in other countries, people are coming over to Britain to avoid discrimination."

During his visit, Mr O'Brien will meet ministers, police chiefs and Roma groups. Home Office staff will give advice on how Britain handles its race re-

lations. "We are dealing with our problems the same way that other countries have to deal with theirs," said Mr O'Brien, although he admitted Britain could not be "holier than thou", particularly in light of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

The numbers of gypsy asylum-seekers are still fairly small. Only 1,200 asylum applications were made from Slovakia and the Czech Republic

in the first 10 months of last year, compared with nearly 6,000 from former Yugoslavia.

But Mr O'Brien said the costs of each applicant were significant. "They claim asylum and then seek to access local authority support and the benefits system. They are then into the appeals system with lots of legal costs associated."

Britain has been encouraged by the commitments to race

equality given by the new governments in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But Mr O'Brien said neither was likely to be allowed to join the European Union while poor race relations forced people to flee.

Anne Thomas, of the Refugee Council, who recently went on a fact-finding mission to the Czech Republic, said the Roma were the victims of "discrimination on a massive scale".

صلى الله عليه وسلم



# Blunkett prepares for school sell-off

ADVERTISEMENTS ARE published by the Government today for private firms to take over education services from local authorities.

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, who announced the unprecedented step yesterday, made clear that if a council's services were all failed by inspectors, all might be contracted out.

Individual contracts to run the Government's numeracy and literacy strategies, council budgets and to help failing schools could be worth millions of pounds.

Firms such as the Nord Anglia education consultants, the American-based Edison Project and the non-profit-making Cibt education services have already put in bids to run a failing Surrey school and are expected to respond to national newspaper advertisements for a list of government-approved contractors.

So far no local education authority has been threatened with new government powers of intervention but ministers are known to be concerned about Hackney, in east London, failed by inspectors more than a year ago.

In a speech which referred repeatedly to the New Labour agenda of "modernisation and reform", Mr Blunkett told the North of England Education Conference in Sunderland: "Where there is consistent failure to deliver adequate services we will intervene. If local education authorities (LEAs) have been doing it badly and doing it badly for a long time, we will

By JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

transform the service in the interests of children and parents, who deserve better."

Mr Blunkett, whose children went to an inner-city Sheffield comprehensive, said people in poor local education authorities could not afford to buy their way out through private education or by moving house. "Mostly it is in the disadvantaged areas that pupils have had a lousy deal for far too long."

His announcement angered teachers. Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "The Conservatives would never have dared to privatise education by bringing in firms operating for profit."

"Serious under-performance demands serious action but it is not acceptable for private companies to profit from a child's state education."

Councils whose services are found to be failing will have to produce an action plan and accept a private contractor chosen by the Government. Voluntary organisations and neighbouring LEAs will also be able to bid for contracts.

Mr Blunkett dismissed as "very silly" suggestions by council leaders that companies such as Virgin Trains would be invited to improve schools.

And he denied there was a rift between himself and the Prime Minister over local authorities. "He and I are absolutely committed to go on with this transformation."



For £55, dog owners can change their dog's coat from a natural shade to a lurid pink, red or yellow

Rea

## RSPCA attacks dyed-dog craze

By DARIUS SANAI

THE FOOTPATHS of suburbia are being graced with an increasing number of barking, hairy creatures in hues from magenta to purple. Yes, dog dyeing is in vogue.

Carole Platt, one of the country's leading exponents of the art, said she is not sure what's behind the craze, but it may have its origins in Manhattan, where in November *Vanity Fair* magazine published a picture of Monica Lewinsky basking in a pink pool. But not every owner can bring a dog in to her grooming salon and expect it to emerge, £55 later, in crimson. "The dog has to be of an extrovert temperament," she said.

The RSPCA is unamused by the trend. A spokeswoman said: "It encourages people to view animals as fashion accessories and not respect them as pets. Dogs are there to be valued, not made fun of."

## Price of chips soars after rain

THE COST of potatoes has more than doubled because of last year's wet weather.

The British Potato Council (BPC) said yesterday that the average farm gate cost of a tonne of spuds had risen from £78 to £167 in 12 months. Much of last year's harvest was wrecked by heavy rainfall at crucial times of the year.

The price rise will prompt fears among millions of fish-and-chips aficionados that one of the country's favourite meals may no longer be a bargain.

A spokesman for the BPC said: "Chip shops like to use Maris Pipers, which last year cost anything from £35 to £90 a tonne as they left the farm. This year a tonne costs anything between £80 and £230 depending on the quality."

"It was a wet spring and many potatoes were planted later than usual. There was a lot of rain during the growing season, and the low tempera-

By LINUS GREGORIADIS

tures also caused problems for farmers." The total potato yield last year was 6.2 million tonnes compared with 6.8 million tonnes in 1997, said the BPC.

Anne Kirk, general secretary of the National Federation of Fish Fryers, said the price rise was a problem for the country's 8,500 fish-and-chip shops, but denied there was a crisis. She said: "Chip shop owners will have realised the price of potatoes has gone up and one or two have already raised their own prices."

But she added: "Although the prices at the moment are high, they are not nearly as high as in 1995 when a bag of potatoes cost around £13."

Fish-and-chip shops use 10 per cent of UK potato yield, and customers eat 30 million portions of chips a year. The price rises come just weeks before National Chip Week, which begins on 15 February.

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# Fixed-rate borrowers losing out

THOUSANDS OF hapless borrowers who took out fixed mortgages two or three years ago at seemingly advantageous rates face the prospect of vastly higher monthly payments than the deals that are available today.

The sudden fall in base rates in the past three months, which on Thursday saw a further base rate cut to 6 per cent, has also led to a drop of about 1.5 points in the cost of a variable mortgage. This has left stranded many borrowers who tried to gamble on future interest rate movements.

Among the worst-affected borrowers are the many who opted for fixed rates between 1995 and the general election in May 1997. Before this, the money markets assumed that the election of a Labour government would lead to higher long-term interest rates.

Five-year and longer-term mortgages, heavily touted by some lenders at the time, were priced accordingly. In July 1995, for example, Abbey National offered a fixed-rate mortgage at 8.75 per cent, expiring in August

BY NIC CICUTTI  
Personal Finance Editor

2000. Those who took that loan would now be paying 1.3 points more than a variable rate deal through Nationwide Building Society. On a £100,000 interest-only loan, that means the fixed-rate loan is currently costing an extra £140 a month.

At the Halifax, a five-year fixed mortgage in November 1996 was pegged at 8.55 per cent. Those who took one out are now paying £666 a month on a £100,000 loan, compared with the bank's current variable rate of 6.02 a month.

In May 1997, five-year deals for first-time borrowers were pegged at 7.65 per cent - a repayment of £618 a month for those who snapped one up. They are now discovering that they cannot switch to a better deal with another lender - or even move to their own mortgage provider's variable rate - because of the heavy redemption penalties. An unnamed mortgage broker said yesterday: "To be honest, I am con-

stantly amazed at the stupidity of some people. They think a building society account is too risky, yet are willing to take a punt on long-term interest rates like some Liffe [London International Financial Futures Exchange] barrow-boy dealer. Fixed-rate mortgages are there for security, not to gamble on."

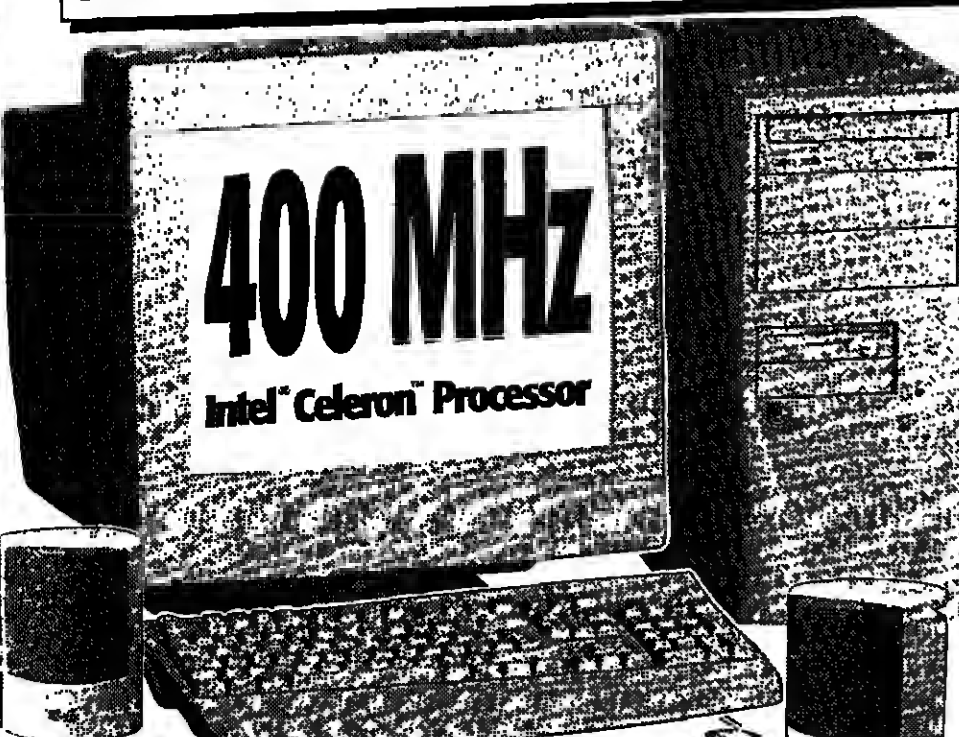
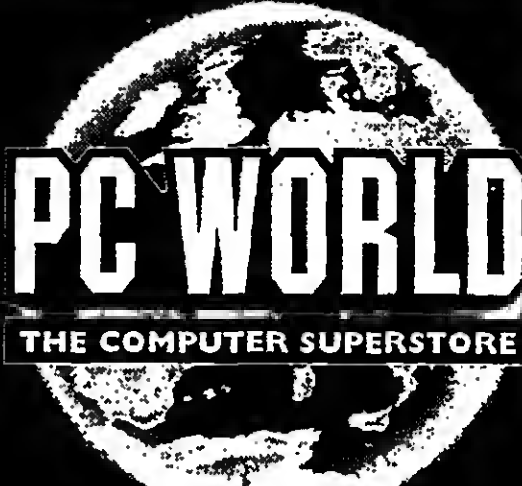
Ray Boulger, technical manager at John Charcol, the UK's largest mortgage broker, said: "One thing to remember is that fixed rates varied widely, even at their most expensive point. Anyone who took independent advice on their loan should still be okay because we were able to recommend the cheapest loans at any time. Moreover, we were also advising people against taking out longer-term fixes because they were too expensive."

A Halifax spokeswoman said: "There will be some people who took a loan out in that period who will find themselves paying considerably more now. But for a considerable period, when rates were higher, they actually gained."



Dyed horse tails being combed at John Boyd Textiles, Britain's last horse hair fabric factory, which is fighting to stop its mill at Castle Cary, Somerset, being turned into flats. Its looms, which weave fabric to restore Victorian upholstery, were installed in 1872. Christopher Jones

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## McLibel two in new court challenge

BY SARAH WILSON

THE FAST food chain McDonald's, which spent about £10m to win an uncollectable £60,000 in the "McLibel" saga, is to throw thousands more into contesting an appeal by the activists in the case.

Helen Steel, 33, and Dave Morris, 44, who have an income of less than £7,500 a year between them, are appealing against the ruling that they libelled McDonald's in a "fact-sheet" first published by London Greenpeace in the late Eighties.

A leading human rights barrister has provided the pair with detailed advice for free, although they will still represent themselves in court.

On Tuesday, Richard Rampton QC, one of the most respected libel siks in the country, will confront them once again.

The first time, despite their lack of legal training, the pair proved several important points. This time they might even win. They will argue that a multi-national corporation should not be able to sue for libel in the same way that governments and local authorities are barred from taking legal action.

The outcome of the appeal is less important for the activists, however, than the publicity it will generate. A website set up by volunteers during the first



Helen Steel: Second bite at the fast food giant

trial has been accessed more than 65 million times. The publicity surrounding the trial has given green activists a platform for disseminating embarrassing information about McDonald's far more widely than any leadet could.

On the day the appeal hearing begins, activists will also screen a film about the case at 100 cinemas and on cable networks around the world, including 18 in Britain.

A spokesman for McDonald's Restaurants Ltd, the UK arm of the worldwide corporation, yesterday defended its decision to spend more money in court. "There were many very serious allegations aired ... at the initial trial. We welcomed the judgment when it was handed down. It is very important (it) is upheld," he said.

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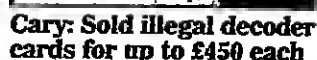


**FOR A MAN** who used to rejoice in the name of "Spangles Mul-

But two days ago, with the

In February Cary pleaded guilty to defrauding Mr Murdoch's BSkyB satellite station of up to £30m. He master-minded a scam in which he sold illegal Sky decoder cards for up to £450 each. It involved cracking the smart-card codes that enable decoders to unscramble satellite television channels.

Cary was remanded in custody and faces a charge of travelling on a false passport.



Cary's lawyer, Roger Chambers, said his client had not yet decided whether to fight

He said: "He is most interesting and a very likeable fellow. He feels that he had been unfairly treated in England and that's the reason he walked out of an open institution."

IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 7

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# Senate brokers deal on Clinton trial

By MARY DEJEVSKY  
in Washington

REPUBLICAN AND Democratic leaders in the Senate hatched a compromise yesterday that should allow the impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton to proceed.

Building on proposals made by the Republican senator Phil Gramm, and the veteran Democrat Edward Kennedy, they agreed that the evidence against Mr Clinton should be presented first, and only then should the question of whether to call witnesses be decided. In the meantime, a bipartisan committee would consider how witnesses would be treated if they were called.

The framework of a solution emerged 24 hours after the opening of only the second presidential impeachment trial in US history, after the Senate had spent the morning in a rare informal session in an attempt to break days of stalemate over how the trial should proceed.

It was adjourned on Thursday afternoon, immediately after the senators had been ceremonially sworn in as jurors, with no date or timetable agreed for its resumption.

Without a resolution, the United States was in the unique - and constitutionally unsettling - position of having the President theoretically on trial for his job, with no certainty about the terms of the trial or its duration. In almost any other country such a situation would be regarded as a major constitutional crisis.

With public interest and concern about the trial apparently minimal, however, and a congressional tradition of negotiating and deal-making on the small print of legislation, the view had been that a compromise would be found.

The big sticking-point was whether the Senate should call



Trent Lott, Senate Republican Majority Leader (left), President Bill Clinton, and Tom Daschle, the Senate Democratic Leader. A deal on the trial seems within reach

live witnesses. When the House of Representatives conducted its hearings, it called only lawyers; the independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr, who conducted the investigation into the Monica Lewinsky affair, and lawyers for Mr Clinton.

They took "as read" the evidence and transcripts of testimony contained in the Starr Report and supporting documents. The Senate was polarised on whether to follow the House example or not. And, while the compromise reached yesterday should allow the trial proper to begin, the underlying problem may only have been postponed.

On one side are a majority of Democrats (effectively toeing the line of the White House) who oppose calling witnesses.

Their most frequent argument is that it could drag out proceedings for months and impede the workings of government.

Behind this, however, lies another reason: the fear that Ms Lewinsky, Linda Tripp, Vernon Jordan or the President's private secretary might say things under cross-examination - perhaps inadvertently - that damaged the President's case. Witnesses would introduce an element of unpredictability that the White House desperately does not want.

On the other side are Republicans, probably a majority of them, who say that the Constitution requires a trial, and a trial should entail consideration of all the evidence and questioning of "live" witnesses. Sen-

ators, they believe, should judge the merits of the case for themselves. Hardliners also believe there may be more stones to be overturned.

One reason why Democrats, who are in the minority, were able to block an agreement so effectively and provided the basis for yesterday's compromise was that some Republicans also worry about the risks

presented by witnesses. On the right are those who do not want their constituents to see them in a forum that might include Ms Lewinsky discussing the more intimate details of her anatomical contact with the President. On the left are those who fear that their more "moderate" constituents would blame them for forcing a popular president to trial, and vote them out at the next election.

The Senate Republican Majority Leader, Trent Lott, said that under the emerging plan the trial would begin next week with opening presentations. Meanwhile, four senators, two from each party, would begin working on the issue of calling witnesses.

"There's a general outline agreement. They're going to work the details out," said the Republican Jim Bunning after all senators had an extraordinary private meeting in the Old Senate Chamber. John Breaux, a Democrat, said that "ultimately there will be a vote on witnesses", indicating that it would be up to the full Senate to decide the issue.

Mr Lott said that under the emerging plan there was "no preclusion of witnesses and no inclusion of witnesses... When we get to that point, we will make the decision then."

The Senate Democratic Leader, Tom Daschle, expected an "overwhelming, bipartisan" vote in favour of the package once it was drafted and submitted to the Senate.

## President still high in polls

By MARY DEJEVSKY  
in Washington

THE DAY after becoming the first president in this century to be subject to a trial by the US Senate, Bill Clinton left his lawyers to fight his corner in Washington and flew to Detroit to exult in the continued good health of the economy.

His "away-day in Motown" to celebrate 93 months of growth and the "longest peace-time expansion on record" was the latest example of the business-as-usual policy he has pursued since the start of the Lewinsky scandal almost a year ago.

It has been credited with keeping his approval rating so high and helping to fend off calls for his resignation or removal. On Thursday, when the Senate

opened the impeachment trial, Mr Clinton's job-approval ratings, as measured in a CNN poll, stood at 63 per cent.

But the significance and uncertainty of the trial may be starting to take a toll. Since his defiant rally in the White House Rose Garden on 19 December, the day the House of Representatives passed two articles of impeachment against him, Mr Clinton has appeared at times preoccupied and distracted.

He has regained none of the weight he lost in the early months of last year and his face looks almost craggy.

### THE SATURDAY PROFILE

**William Rehnquist's ability as a lawyer and as a judge is unquestioned**

IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 5

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# Blairs moved by dying six-year-old

TONY BLAIR was visibly moved yesterday when he met the six-year-old girl the Blairs are sponsoring in a South African care home for children dying of Aids.

The Blairs first met the child two years ago and have been sponsoring her with a gift of £15 a month, but now she is living on borrowed time.

The girl, whom reporters were asked to call Mary to protect her anonymity, was HIV-positive at birth and was abandoned by her mother, who had Aids.

Mr Blair kept hold of Mary's hand from the moment he emerged from the Nazareth House care home for a photocall on the sunbaked lawn and play area.

While Cherie Blair played with other children, who are also suffering from the disease, Mr Blair took Mary to a climbing frame, and chatted quietly to her.

"The contribution people make is up to individuals but the

BY COLIN BROWN  
in Cape Town

means of tackling issues like this is to recognise we are living in a global community," he said.

Over 80 per cent of the world's Aids victims are in Africa, and South Africa is facing a growing epidemic of the disease, with more than 16 per cent of the population HIV-positive.

Mary is one of 40 children who are being treated with pain-killers and antibiotics, but who are not normally expected to live beyond about six years of age. The country is too poor to provide expensive maintenance drugs for Aids victims such as AZT, said a spokeswoman for the home.

The Blairs have been kept informed of Mary's progress with photographs of the child, and occasional letters. All the children at the home, which is run by nuns, have arrived through the courts. "Children with Aids

don't get fostered," said the spokeswoman.

The visit highlighted the £100m in funding that Britain is giving globally over the next three years towards combating Aids. Much of the help will go to South Africa, which has one of the fastest growing rates of HIV infection in the world - 1,500 new cases each day, compared with the same total each year in the UK.

It is estimated that by 2006 - when South Africa hopes to host the World Cup - more people will die from Aids than from all other causes, and there could be two million Aids orphans like Mary.

The children's home is located in an idyllic setting, under Table Mountain, on a hillside with a garden fringed by palm trees, and with a view to the Atlantic.

Mr Blair also announced a grant to the home of £20,000, which will allow an extension to be built to take another 14 HIV-positive children.



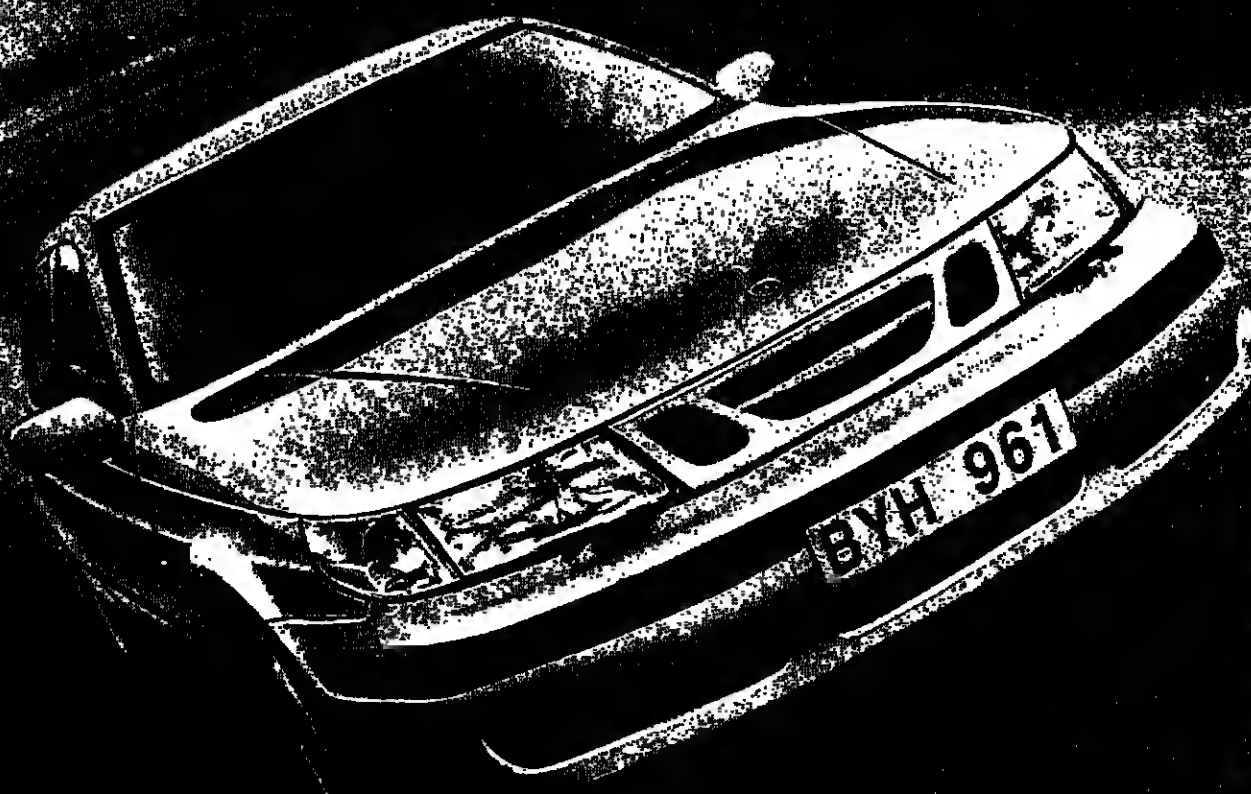
Mr Blair chats with children infected with the Aids virus at Nazareth House, where the girl his family sponsors is cared for. Peter Andrews



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## Three hit as police fire on Muslims

SOUTH AFRICAN police said that at least three people were injured in Cape Town yesterday when officers opened fire on Muslim militants attempting to demonstrate outside a function attended by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

The incident occurred shortly after Mr Blair's party arrived at Cape Town's 17th-century Dutch castle, where he was to present medals to 15 British soldiers attached to the South African National Defence Forces. Among those injured were Talia Bader, a leader of the militant G-Force Islamic group in Cape Town, and Lynn Murray, a reporter with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, who was hit by shotgun pellets in the legs and hand.

A police spokesman said that the officers present had fired a stun grenade and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters, who had not been given permission to demonstrate and who had been chanting death threats against Mr Blair.

He could not confirm the use of shotguns, although reporters present, including *The Independent*, saw or heard officers firing at least 20 rounds from levelled shotguns in the direction of the crowd. Despite the end of apartheid-era unrest, shotgun rounds, euphemistically called "bird shot", are still routinely used for riot control.

While police later claimed that they believed shots had been fired at them from the crowd, no journalists or civilian witnesses could confirm this. The first shots, including a number of tear gas canisters, appeared to have been directed at the protest leaders when they failed to disperse, at about 4.30pm. A police spokesman,

BY ED O'LOUGHLIN  
in Cape Town

Inspector Eugene Sitzer, later confirmed that Ms Bader appeared to have been struck in the head by a rubber bullet.

Other demonstrators, including a young boy, were also seen to be injured but managed to flee to escape arrest. Police opened fire again, five minutes later, when a number of Muslim men and youths regrouped and began to hurl stones and missiles. It was at this point that the journalist was hit.

Last night Mr Blair played down the violence and the demonstrations. "You get used to protesters and there weren't very many of them. I think it's pretty limited and there were a very small number of demonstrators," he said.

A South African minister apologised to Mr Blair for the violence when he later made his speech in the South African Parliament building. "We express our regrets. We support free speech but this must be done without violence," Kader Asmal, the Minister for Water, told Mr Blair.

The shootings marked the culmination of two days of "cat and mouse" between Cape Town's police and members of the area's small but vocal Muslim minority seeking to demonstrate their anger at the recent British and American military attacks on Iraq.

On Thursday, several members of a group calling itself Muslims Against Global Oppression were arrested after pistol shots were fired at a police vehicle attempting to break up an illegal march from the US consulate to the British High Commission.

## PM helps to save swimmer

TONY BLAIR has gone where even the boldest spin doctor might fear to position him. It emerged yesterday that Mr Blair helped save a drowning man's life, pulling him out of the sea in the Seychelles and on to the yacht that the Prime Minister had chartered for the day. Actually the man wasn't exactly drowning but "would soon have been in big trouble" and Mr Blair didn't get into the water to rescue him.

No matter. This was a spin doctor's dream come true. Not only was Mr Blair a hero. But had he returned from holiday earlier to ensure his children were back at school on time then clearly a man might have died. But some elements of the story did lack the heroic touch. Mr Blair had taken to the water because his mobile phone couldn't get a signal on the

BY DAVID LISTER

beach. The holidaymaker did not recognise his rescuer.

But the skipper of the boat, Gerard Muffard, was effusive in his praise. He explained: "Mr Blair called out and asked him if he needed help, and he said 'yes'." He added: "Mr Blair was very calm. He just said to him 'We can help you. Where do you want us to take you?' We got the dinghy alongside the man and he was able to climb in, but all three of us (including a bodyguard) gave him extra help to get him into the boat."

Police in the Seychelles capital, Victoria, just said an incident occurred and the Prime Minister hauled the man on board. But then police the world over can be jealous of the drama, publicity and awe generated by a true super-hero.







# Pakistan locked into a tragic cycle of violence

IT IS more an eyesore than a school. In this ostentatious middle-class suburb of Islamabad, where the concrete villas are clad in fancy tiles, sits a huddle of half-finished structures separated by a stretch of mud. There is a mosque of red cement, a hovel of whitewashed brick in the dormitory two small children doze under quilts. In the crude, pitch-dark kitchen, older boys squat in the dirt to prepare the lentil curry that will end the day's fast.

This primitive school represents the most pressing problem for Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif. It is an Islamic fundamentalist school, and there are 25,000 like it across the country. It is poverty stricken, because this and previous governments have done everything they could to cut its sources of funding.

Its headteacher, in long black robes and with a sweeping beard, disavows any involvement in politics, but he is an active member of an extreme Islamist party, the Jamiat Ulema Islam. And it is the country boys graduating from

BY ANWAR IQBAL AND  
PETER POPHAM  
in Islamabad

schools like these who go on to become the footsoldiers of Afghanistan's Taliban and their ultra-violent equivalents in Pakistan, notably the Sipah Sahaba Pakistan - the group held responsible for shooting 18 Shia Muslims dead in a mosque in central Pakistan last week.

Pakistan is locked in a cycle of violence. Karachi is the notorious case, where descendants of migrants from India have shoot-outs on a daily basis. But, thanks to the Afghan war, the whole country is saturated with weapons and bloody mayhem is all too common.

In normal times, Mr Sharif might manage to live with violence at this level. It is, after all, restricted to professional terrorists: in the long attrition between Sunni and Shia terrorists, sparked by the Islamic revolution in Iran, each massacre has been followed by predictions that the communities would take up arms against each other - but it has never happened.

But these are not normal times. When Mr Sharif ordered Pakistan's nuclear tests in May, he set a clock ticking towards economic disaster. This was clearly understood at the time, because of the predictable effects of sanctions and the low level of foreign reserves. But he went ahead with the tests.

He then pushed the hands of the clock further towards midnight when he initiated aggressive action against Hudco, a London-based power company which owns and runs the biggest private power plant in the country. Claiming that the company was guilty of corruption in its dealings with the government of his predecessor, Benazir Bhutto, he raided its offices and had arrest warrants issued for its executives. A better way of scaring off foreign investors is hard to imagine.

Foreign business continues to fight shy of the country, and one compelling reason is law and order. Moeen Qureshi, a former caretaker prime minister now in business in Washington DC, said this was a "very serious" situation. "How many factories in

Karachi stay in operation for the whole month? You will find all of them remain closed for one-third of the time (due to large-scale extortion)... the problem is spreading in the interior of the country as well."

It was in October that Mr Sharif first indicated his determination to tackle the problem when he severed his party's ties with its ally Mohajir Qaumi Movement, which is both the dominant political party in Karachi and the city's main terrorist organisation. He clamped martial law on the city, and set up special military courts to try those accused of terrorist crimes. The first two men to be sentenced to death by the courts were hanged last week.

The approach was draconian, but many believe it was long overdue. Mr Sharif's harsh action may be a first step towards restoring government control.

But last week's atrocities - the massacre in the mosque and the bridge bomb two days earlier that was believed to be an assassination attempt on Mr Sharif but killed four others - are seen by some as a sign that

the war against the terrorists is not going to be won easily.

Pakistan's hope of leaving the present economic storm depends substantially on Mr Sharif holding his nerve. If his courage fails and the terrorists regain the upper hand, it is likely a means will be found to remove the government. If law and order improves, bringing signs of an economic spring, he may become the first Pakistani prime minister since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to serve his full term.

After months of deepening gloom following the two countries' nuclear tests, a chink of light entered Indo-Pakistani relations yesterday when the first bus from India since partition arrived in Pakistan's city of Lahore. Agreement to inaugurate a regular bus service between Delhi and Lahore was practically the only positive outcome of recent talks between the two old enemies, which have fought three bitter wars in the past 50 years. Threats by Shiv Sena, the Bombay-based Hindu extremists, to disrupt the service "by all possible means, including violence," failed to materialise.



A young scavenger running past burning tyres in Islamabad yesterday during Shia protests against last week's mosque massacre on Pakistan. *Muzammil Rasha*

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#### IN BRIEF

##### UN moves to calm Sierra Leone

UNITED NATIONS officials flew to Sierra Leone yesterday and offered to mediate between the government and rebels seeking the release of one of their leaders. But Sam Bockarie, a commander of the two-day-old rebellion, rejected the offer and threatened a new offensive.

##### US may seek Pinochet trial

THE UNITED STATES confirmed that it is considering whether the former Chilean dictator, Augusto Pinochet, can be tried there for a 1976 car bombing in Washington that killed one of his opponents, Orlando Letelier. Spanish prosecutors want to extradite the 83-year-old general from Britain.

##### Commission admits gun ownership

THE EUROPEAN Commission yesterday said its security staff hold five high-powered rifles - contradicting earlier denials of the allegation. A spokeswoman said: "They were bought at a time when there was a terrorist threat."

##### Prison mutiny leaves 13 dead

A PRISON mutiny in a former Soviet labour camp left 13 people dead after Azerbaijani forces ended a riot. At least two men died in the revolt, at Gobustan, 40 miles from the capital, Baku. They had been jailed for their part in a coup attempt against President Gaidar Aliyev.

##### Serb police shot dead in Kosovo

THREE SERBIAN police officers were killed and three civilians wounded in Kosovo yesterday but the cause was unclear. A spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the victims were caught in crossfire in Suva Reka, 25 miles southwest of Pristina.

##### Anwar Ibrahim turns the tables

THE FORMER Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, who is in court facing sex and corruption charges, has turned the tables on his accusers by issuing a writ for compensation against the police who arrested him.

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مركز من الامم



# Horse whisperer shares her trail craft

FOR THE campers from the city, a tent in the foothills of Barrington Tops National Park represents a week's adventure. For Jillian Sullivan and Cactus, her ginger mongrel, it represents a way of life. For nine months of the year, she drives cattle across the wilderness of New South Wales and sleeps under canvas.

Camp conditions are no excuse for slovenliness. A woman's touch is everywhere - flowers in the dunny, which is sashed out with disinfectant daily; hot water in the shower block and food supplied with a maternal eye for detail. "So," she says, as a blackened iroo billycan brings water to the boil, "who's for breakfast?"

IT IS Moody, and another urban gang have arrived for their initiation into the ways of the hush. Patience with beginners ("Oh God, I've never sat on a horse - what will I do if it bites me?") is a quality Jillian has had to develop since giving up her old life, three years ago. She ran a ranch in the outback with her husband Steve, until it became painfully obvi-

## A WEEK IN THE LIFE

### THE DROVER, NEW SOUTH WALES

sheep and cows. I just had to stop now and then to feed the little one," she said.

**BY TUESDAY** the heat and dust of the trail demand respite. The townies dreaming of Clint Eastwood now have a chance to play Pale Rider and bare a set of lily-white legs. Humans and horses alike cool off in a hill-abong as the hundred-odd head of cattle being driven to market take their own rest in some shaded pasture, up ahead.

Jillian slopes off to a secluded spot for a private swim before leading the party back to base for dinner. No Spaghetti Western, this, though. A powerful smell of roast beef wafts through the evening air as the riders brush down their mounts for the night before tucking in to hot meat and cold beer.

**WEDNESDAY, AND** the paying customers are treated to a demonstration of Jillian's

equine understanding. She steps into a paddock under the jaundiced cyc of a mare, spilt, she explains, by mistreatment at the hands of former owners. A whip crackles at her rear, the beast creaks warily: "What we're doing is getting inside the horse's mind, driving her away, like a lead mare would do in a wild herd," Jillian says. Then, after half an hour of this *pas de deux*, the *coup de theatre*—a mare puts her head on Jillian's shoulder: "She wants to be my friend, that's pretty amazing, isn't it?"

"Horse whispering" techniques form the basis of Jillian's whole philosophy. "Horses are pacifists," she says, maintaining her vigilance over tourists with bad riding habits, ensuring that even beginners are safe in the wide open spaces of the Hunter Valley: "If you treat him right, he won't want to run away from you."

**COME THURSDAY** and the trail leads to a natural vantage point from high ground on Jillian's rented property over the 650,000-acre ranch belonging to Australia's richest



**Driving cattle in the Australian outback is work for some, an adventure for urbanites** *David Burnett/Colorific*

man, Kerry Packer. The nine lush pitches, where the media tycoon would seek solace in younger days in a game of polo, gleam in iridescent contrast to the scrub of the hill-sides. The hundred or so staff are sheltering from the rain

perhaps in their own private, luxurious cinema.

**FRIDAY** AND the serious business of returning the steers to their pens requires all the drovers' new-found naviga-

tional skills. Mission accomplished, and it is off back to the city, to nurse the sunburn and saddle sores, and tell their tales to the timorous ones left behind. Coming the other way is Steve, returning from a week's toil on the Sydney stock market to

place a proprietorial arm around this Belle of the Bush. "I thought I must be crazy leaving my husband to go and live in a teot," she says. "But if you can teach someone something in your life, it's all worth it."

**ANNABEL MCGOLDRICK**

# Jerry Brown brings Panthers to the people

**BY ANDREW GUMBEL**  
in Los Angeles

NOBODY HAS heard a political activist shout "Power to the people!" for a good while hut in Oakland - San Francisco's ugly sister across the bay, famous for its Sixties radicalism - the slogan has become quite fashionable in recent days.

First came Monday's inauguration of Jerry Brown, the mercurial former governor of California and twice presidential candidate, who has returned to the grass roots as the city's mayor. And now two old members of the Black Panthers, the radical movement that fanned out from Oakland to fight for self-determination for blacks, have announced that they are returning home.

David Hilliard, the Panthers' chief of staff who spent several years in jail for his involvement in a shoot-out with police, returned to his old high school in West Oakland and announced he would seek to represent the district in next year's city council elections. His campaign manager will be Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Panthers and a man perhaps best known for being bound and

### Jerry Brown: Mercurial

gagged in court during the trial of the so-called Chicago Eight at the height of the anti-Vietnam counter-culture in the late 1960s. Mr Seale said he would move back to the West Coast from Philadelphia.

"All power to all the people!" the two men chanted happily in a nostalgic throwback to earlier, more hot-headed days.

Both made clear, however, that now whites and blacks can work together and armed struggle is no longer a political requirement. Mr Brown is their inspiration. "We now have a progressive mayor who sounds more like a Black Panther with every speech he makes," Mr Hilliard said.



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# BUSINESS

## BRIEFING

### Insider dealing probe at UBS

THE WORLD'S largest bank, UBS, faces fresh embarrassment after it emerged that the Zurich authorities are investigating alleged insider dealing before the merger between Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation senior executives just over a year ago. Spokesmen for the bank said yesterday that it would be "happy to provide any information" to the authorities. The bank was hit in October after the chairman, Mathias Caballero, quit in the wake of the revelations of heavy losses as a result of the problems at Long-Term Capital Management, the US hedge fund that was bailed out in late September.

### Thames names new chairman

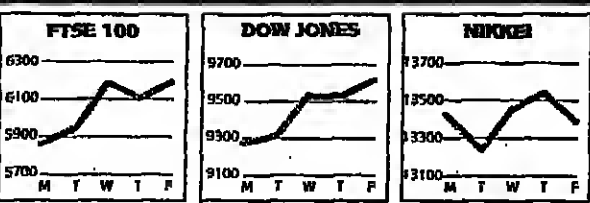


ROGER CARR (left), the chief executive of the fire and security products group Williams Holdings, is to become the next chairman of Thames Water. Mr Carr, 52, will succeed Sir Robert Clarke who is retiring in March aged 70. Thames said Mr Carr, who has been a director of the company since 1994, was being appointed to the chairmanship in a non-executive capacity but declined to give details of his salary or how many days a week he would put in.

### ENIC confirms bid for Wembley

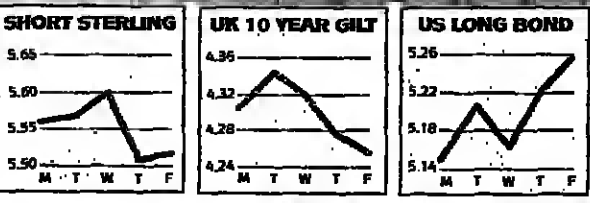
ENIC, the investment group, yesterday confirmed that it had made an approach to buy Wembley, the group which owns the stadium. ENIC said it had made an indicative offer of £12.5p per Wembley share, of which 20p was in cash and the remainder in ENIC shares. Although the offer was rejected by Wembley's board, the group's three non-executive directors have written to ENIC saying they would recommend the offer to shareholders. Wembley Stadium is on the verge of being sold to a national trust which will redevelop it with the help of funding from the National Lottery.

## STOCK MARKETS



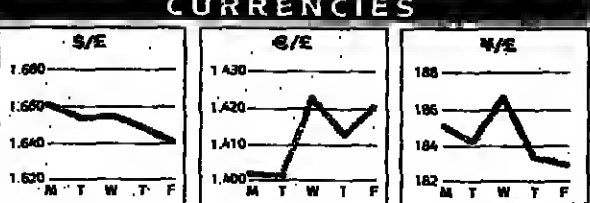
Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5147.20	46.90	0.92	5153.20	4599.20	2.63
FTSE 250	4276.40	29.70	0.69	4276.40	4247.60	3.36
FTSE 350	2888.70	20.90	0.73	2888.70	2210.40	2.73
FTSE All Share	2784.68	20.11	0.73	2886.52	2143.53	2.78
FTSE SmallCap	2133.80	14.20	0.67	2193.80	1834.40	3.79
FTSE Fledgling	1177.80	7.60	0.65	1177.80	1046.20	4.27
FTSE AIM	806.90	1.40	0.17	1146.90	761.30	1.25
FTSE Europe 100	2509.02	14.75	0.59	3079.27	2018.15	87.89
FTSE Europe 300	1253.32	6.93	0.56	1332.07	880.63	0.99
Dow Jones	9617.83	79.30	0.83	9562.22	7400.30	1.59
Nikkei	13301.81	144.25	1.07	13352.95	12787.90	1.08
Hang Seng	10722.70	29.13	0.27	11926.16	6544.29	3.23
Dax	5392.84	-69.63	-1.31	6217.83	3833.71	1.59
S&P 500	1271.95	2.17	0.17	1272.50	912.83	1.24
Nasdaq	2353.82	27.73	1.19	2333.70	1357.09	0.30
Toronto 300	6878.00	77.51	1.14	7837.70	5320.90	1.58
Brazil Ibovespa	7005.42	82.05	1.18	12339.14	4575.69	8.48
Belgium Be100	3573.96	-34.90	-0.97	3713.21	2357.78	1.62
Australian All Ordinaries	529.27	-1.51	-0.28	600.69	366.55	1.76
France CAC 40	4245.42	14.75	0.35	4404.94	2809.73	1.90
Spain IBEX 35	3767.00	-127.00	-3.34	3917.00	2417.00	1.08
Madrid IBSX 35	10412.30	-31.10	-0.30	10989.80	6869.90	1.77
Irish All Share	5276.39	-8.90	-0.17	5581.70	3732.57	1.87
S Korea KOSPI	626.33	-11.26	-1.77	698.41	277.37	0.97
Australia ASX	2856.30	-41.00	-1.42	2902.90	2386.70	3.12

## INTEREST RATES



MONEY MARKET RATES					BOND YIELDS				
Index	3 month	Yr chg	1 Year	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg	
UK	5.95	-1.61	5.46	-2.12	4.26	-1.78	4.28	-1.71	
US	5.04	-0.65	5.09	-0.66	4.85	-	5.26	-	
Japan	0.54	-0.23	0.56	-0.18	2.00	0.12	2.74	0.24	
Germany	3.20	-0.41	3.14	-0.79	3.73	-1.40	4.65	-1.03	

## CURRENCIES



Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6413	-0.08	1.6129
Euro	1.4209	+0.00	1.4079
Yen	182.94	+1.10	214.05
S. Index	99.20	+0.20	103.60
£ Index	109.70	+0.40	110.40

## OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	11.39	0.08	15.07
S&P 500	291.25	-0.10	281.05
Silver (\$)	5.21	-0.08	6.06

## TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.5137	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.62
Austria (schillings)	18.81	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0153
Belgium (francs)	55.31	New Zealand (\$)	2.9102
Canada (\$)	2.4279	Norway (krone)	11.83
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7933	Portugal (escudos)	273.21
Denmark (crowns)	10.25	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9985
Finland (markka)	8.1648	Singapore (\$)	2.6297
France (francs)	8.9894	Spain (pesetas)	227.69
Germany (marks)	2.6897	South Africa (rand)	9.1829
Greece (drachma)	444.86	Sweden (krona)	12.64
Hong Kong (\$)	12.57	Switzerland (francs)	2.2175
Ireland (pounds)	1.0766	Thailand (bahts)	55.00
India (rupees)	62.93	Turkey (liras)	5054.14
Israel (shekels)	6.5682	USA (\$)	1.6082
Italy (lira)	2664		
Japan (yen)	179.82		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9988		
Malta (lira)	0.6026		

Rates for indication purposes only  
Source: Thomas Cook

## Marston turns tables with £330m Wolves bid

THE BID BATTLE for Marston Thompson & Evershed took an unprecedented twist yesterday when the regional brewer turned on Wolverhampton & Dudley, its hostile suitor, by launching a £330m counter-bid.

Marston's move is believed to be the first time that a UK company has attempted the so-called "Pac-Man defence", where a firm on the receiving end of an unwanted bid attempts to swallow its predator.

Marston is offering two of its shares and 246p in cash for each Wolverhampton share. At the same time, it proposes to pay its own shareholders a special dividend of 123p per share. The offer counters Wolverhampton's cash-and-shares bid for Marston, which was launched at the end of November.

However, Wolverhampton immediately rejected the bid. David Miller, the chairman, said: "Marston's clearly have no de-

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

fence to our logical proposal for industry consolidation and have therefore chosen to embark on an expensive and flawed counter-attack aimed at distracting their own shareholders from the merits of our bid."

Marston, best known for its Pedigree bitter and its Pilsner & Piano pub chain, said it would fund the bid by selling 1,150 tenanted pubs to raise about £250m.

It will close Wolverhampton's breweries in Wolverhampton and Hartlepool, shifting some production to its own brewery in Burton-upon-Trent. At the same time Marston has negotiated a deal with Bass, the brewing giant, to take over the production of Banks's, Wolverhampton's best-selling bitter.

Marston said the combined moves, which would lead to the loss of 340 jobs, would address the problems of over-capacity in the regional



Peter Mandelson enjoying a pint at the Wolves-owned Camerons brewery in Hartlepool. North News and Pictures

brewing industry and yield annual cost savings of £24m.

Nick Letcher, the chief executive, said: "We believe there is a compelling commercial logic to this offer while more cash will be returned to the combined shareholder group." Under the terms of the deal, Wolverhampton shareholders will hold 55 per

cent of the share capital of the enlarged group with Marston shareholders owning the remaining 45 per cent.

Amid frantic trading, Wolverhampton shares yesterday jumped 72.5p to 510p, while Marston's shares were up 4p to 302.5p. At yesterday's closing prices the respective bids val-

ued each Wolverhampton share at 851p and each Marston share at 302p, but brokers pointed out that these values were artificially inflated.

Marston's unprecedented move caused confusion in the City. It is understood the Stock Exchange initially refused to release the announcement, believing that Marston's and Wolverhampton's names had been swapped over by accident on the announcement.

Institutional investors, many of whom own shares in both companies, gave Marston's move a cautious welcome. "We are not unhappy with Marston's move," one said. "Of course we would have preferred an agreed deal, but they have been trying to do that for two and a half years."

Nigel Popham, an analyst at Teather & Greenwood, said: "Obviously Wolves is not going to take this lying down. But they will now have to offer a lot more - probably around 380p a share."

## German slump knocks profits at RMC

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

RMC, the concrete and aggregates business, issued a shock profits warning yesterday, blaming bad weather and a slump in demand in the former East Germany. Profits in 1998 will not now exceed £265m before exceptional items, compared with current market forecasts averaging £295m and the 1997 total of £308m.

The shares had already begun to slide this week in anticipation of a cautious trading statement but the severity of the warning took City analysts by surprise.

The shares which peaked at £14 last summer fell 69p to 68p in early trading before closing 57p lower at 66p, wiping £150m off the market value of the company, leading some analysts to speculate that it could be vulnerable to a bid.

Analysts immediately slashed forecasts for both 1998 and 1999 by around £20m. One broker now expects profits as low as £257m in 1998 and median forecasts for 1999 have



RMC's concrete and aggregates business has suffered because of bad weather and falling demand in eastern Germany. Analysts have slashed forecasts and some say the company could be vulnerable to a bid

been cut from £310m-£320m to £280m-£290m.

A drop in demand in eastern Germany has been inevitable as the tax incentives offered to construction projects following reunification came to an end, but the speed and size of the slump has taken the company by surprise, Peter Young, the chief executive said yesterday.

Demand was expected to fall by up to 20 per cent over two years but after a 15 per cent fall in the first half it has fallen a further 20 per cent in the second half and a decline in volume has led to a drop in prices.

The slump in demand in eastern Germany has begun to have a knock-on effect in the rest of Germany, which remains RMC's biggest single

market. Demand has also fallen away in Israel, as a result of the continuing political uncertainty, but business in the UK has been satisfactory, demand and prices for ready-mixed concrete have been steady, and price increases have offset flat demand for aggregates.

Demand in the rest of Europe has also been satisfactory, Mr Young said, and trading results

remain encouraging in the US, and especially in California.

Prospects in Germany will not become clear until the spring, but the company has merged its five German divisions into three and cut a further 230 jobs at a cost of £10m. Gearing is still low at 32 per cent, however, and the company expects to maintain recent spending levels on acquisitions, Mr Young said.

## C&W shares soar 10% as predators line up offers

SHARES in Cable & Wireless gained almost 10 per cent yesterday amid rumours that the telecoms giant was about to receive a takeover bid.

In heavy trading C&W shares closed at 888.5p, up 74.5p, as reports suggested that several potential predators were preparing to make offers for the company.

C&W has been at the centre of bid speculation since last month when Dick Brown, the chief executive, unexpectedly resigned to take up a new position as chief executive of EDS, the US computer services company.

One story suggested that Ralph Robins, the chairman,

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

had appointed the investment bank BT Alex Brown to find a buyer for the business.

C&W refused to comment, but observers said the speculation made sense given that the company's shares were still trading at a large discount to break-up value of its assets.

Chris Godsmark, telecoms analyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "We think a break-up or a sale of C&W is the quickest way to realise shareholder value, given that the company is without a chief executive." The broker estimates C&W's break-up value at 1,100p a share.

One possibility mooted was a bid organised by Global One, the international alliance in which Deutsche Telekom, Sprint and France Telecom are partners.

However, a range of other potential bidders are likely to be interested in C&W, which has interests in attractive telecoms assets, including controlling stakes in Hong Kong Telecom and Cable & Wireless Communications, the UK's largest cable operator.

Experts said any bid would have to be agreed by the board because a hostile bidder would be forced to buy out the minority shareholders in Hong Kong Telecom as well.

## Lawyers consider action against Griffin's US parent

LAWYERS representing some of the 110 self-employed Liffe futures traders put out of business by the fall of Griffin, the Chicago-based futures broker, are considering taking action against Griffin's US parent.

The threat of action in the US emerged as the lawyers began talks with the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) in an effort to win compensation for the traders.

David Greene of Edwin Coe, which is representing a number of locals - as the traders are known - said that as the UK arm of Griffin was only a branch of the Chicago opera-

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

tion, the American company might be legally liable to compensate the Liffe traders.

Yesterday traders in London warned that the £6m losses made by John Ho Park that led to Griffin's closure before Christmas could result in an ugly legal battle. The three solicitors' firms retained by the traders are threatening legal action against the SFA or the US parent company as a last resort.

None of the locals can start to trade again until they get back some of their funds that were frozen when Griffin collapsed. Stephen Woolfe of City law firm Taylor Joyson Gar-

rett, who is advising four locals, said: "We are looking at the options for recovering [the locals'] assets from Griffin as quickly as possible - either through the regulators or through Griffin itself."

Mr Woolfe said one key question was whether the locals' funds should have been pooled by Messrs Pierson, the Dutch bank that cleared for Mr Park on the Eurex exchange, or whether they should have been kept in separate "designated" accounts for each trader.

Another avenue could be to allege a "breach of trust" by the Dutch bank on the grounds that locals' funds were being held in trust, said Mr Woolfe.

## AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

### LONDON

SHARES closed sharply up, buoyed by a rally on Wall Street and takeover talk. The FTSE 100 index closed at 5,147.2, up 46 points, after touching a record 5,195.6 just after 2 pm.

Traders were encouraged by rumours of a bid by Deutsche Telekom for Cable & Wireless. Other telecoms stocks, including Orange and Telewest, rose in sympathy. Smaller stocks made modest gains, with the FT All-Share gaining 20 points to 2,784.7.

Market report, page 19

### NEW YORK

STOCKS ROSE for the third time in four days. The economy added more jobs than expected in December, increasing optimism over profits. The Dow Jones rose 53.27 to 9,590.03 in midday trading. The S&P 500 was up 0.91 to 1,270.64 and Nasdaq jumped 25.07 to 2,351.16. All three set records in the first 15 minutes of trading. "Everybody's saying they're buying because things are going up. That sets us up for volatility," said Dan Mathison at DE Shaw Securities.

### TOKYO

The Nikkei ended 144.7 points down at 13,391.8, as concerns over the rising yen's impact on blue-chips' earnings continued to damage sentiment. Traders were anticipating a raft of profit downgrades soon, as most large exporters calculate earnings forecasts at around 120 yen to the dollar. The dollar was trading at 111 yen by late afternoon in Tokyo. Falls in Sony, Honda and Toyota shares were partly cushioned by continued strength in semiconductor-related issues.

### HONG KONG

THE Hang Seng closed 27.1 points higher at 10,722.7 after soaring more than 200 points in early afternoon amid expectations of a half-point cut in local savings rates. Leading banks later announced a quarter-point cut in prime rates, leaving the prime lending rate at 8.75 per cent. Traders were cautious on the immediate outlook, although the market rallied through most of last week, gaining more than 900 points since Monday.

### FRANKFURT

THE XETRA DAX closed up 24.80 points at 5,370.51, leaving it up 7.3 per cent on the week. Rumours in London that Deutsche Telekom would bid for Cable & Wireless failed to spur its shares, which fell 4.8 per cent amid heavy trading on reports a joint venture would suffer a 1998 post-tax loss of \$808m. Dresdner Bank rose 7.8 per cent. Tuesday's confirmation it had spun off DM25bn worth of non-bank shareholdings into a separate company is seen as paving the way for a US acquisition.



# Pac-Man defence finally takes the stage

ACCORDING TO the records, the Pac-Man defence has never been tried before, in Britain at least. Named after a once famous and now ancient computer game, the idea of which was to turn round and gobble up the little monster, plenty have talked about using it as a way of seeing off an unwanted takeover bid, but nobody has actually attempted it, less still pulled it off.

Judging by Marston Thompson & Evershed's £330m bid for Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, you can see why. The Stock Exchange was so astonished by the announcement that it felt obliged to check this wasn't a mistake or a hoax before posting it on the screen. Wolverhampton & Dudley had been bidding for Marston in a mixture of shares and cash. Now Marston is bidding for Wolves, also in shares and cash.

That caused Wolverhampton's shares to climb sharply on the stock market yesterday, greatly enhancing the value of its offer for Marston, which in turn enhances



JEREMY WARNER

*The choice is between two underperformers that have consistently matched each other in disappointment*

the value of its offer for Wolves. In these circumstances, it becomes very hard to see what fair value for the combined group is, or indeed how it should be split between the two sides.

Harder still for investors is to judge between the two alternative strategies, for neither company

has exactly covered itself in glory in recent years. The choice is between two underperformers that have consistently matched each other in disappointment.

The Marston strategy does at least have a certain vindictive style about it. If successful, Marston will lay waste to its attacker's territory, sacking its management and many of its employees, closing its two main breweries and selling many of its pubs. Most insulting of all, it plans to contract out the brewing of Wolves' best-selling Banks' bitter and mild to Bass. Sweet revenge indeed.

Unfortunately, it is not clear that any of this will do much for investors, many of whom are shareholders in both companies. On the other hand it certainly ratchets up the investment banking and legal fees. Both sides can now presumably charge for a bid as well as a defence. What a racket.

PERHAPS IT IS the launch of the euro with its promise of ever cheaper money, but this latest cut

in interest rates has, as never before, had many of us scurrying away to our filing cabinets to check up on our mortgage and savings accounts. All too often, the result has proved a disturbing one. What looked like such a great deal when we signed up all that time ago now turns out to be a real stinker. What's more, it is going to cost us an arm and a leg to chuck it in and sign up with something more modern and user-friendly.

For instance, a colleague finds himself locked into a fixed-rate mortgage which has come to cost more than the better variable rate he faces big redemption penalties if he tries to shift. Meanwhile, my wife has discovered that the Cheltenham & Gloucester 90-day notice account which she opened for a small inheritance a few years ago, now pays less than the same organisation's instant access account. To disentangle herself, she has to give three months' notice or again face a very hefty withdrawal penalty.

In many cases, however, it is merely inertia which makes us stay with what has plainly become a disadvantageous product. It is often said that it is more common to get divorced than shift your bank account; the same is largely true of savings and borrowings. Once signed up, we generally can't be bothered, or lack the time, to change.

Traditionally, the financial services industry has relied on this inertia, laziness, misplaced loyalty, call it what you will; it's one of the reasons our banks, building societies and life assurance companies manage to remain both inefficient and highly profitable at the same time.

But things are changing. New low-cost competitors are transforming the landscape, both for savings and mortgages, and suddenly it seems possible to get genuine value for money. The industry may not be able to rely on inertia for much longer.

The launch of the euro has added fresh impetus to the search for value, and that's possibly what's concentrating minds so much right now. Unprecedented numbers are expected to change their mort-

gage and savings providers over the next year. As it happens, the euro's promise of very cheap mortgage deals is something of an illusion. According to John Charcol, the independent mortgage advisers, it is hard to get a mortgage rate on the Continent of much better than 5 per cent, despite the fact that the Euro-land base rate is only 3 per cent.

If our own financial services industry leaves something to be desired, plainly the Continental one has got a very long way to go, for in Britain it is now possible to get a variable rate mortgage at very close to base rate.

In any case, if you are prepared to factor currency risk into your mortgage payments, it would make more sense to take out a loan in Japan, where the base rate is just a quarter of a percentage point. Don't forget, however, that the so-called "yen carry trade" - that is borrowing cheap in Japan to lend more expensively in the US and the UK - nearly toppled some of the world's biggest hedge funds last autumn. Currency speculation is best left to the professionals.

Meanwhile, there are some quite astonishing deals on offer back home, by historic standards at least. With the outlook for interest rates so benign, some fixed-rate deals are already close to or lower than most euro mortgage rates. West Bromwich is offering 4.99 per cent fixed for two years and 5.25 per cent for five, with no trailer penalties. Savills Private Finance has launched a two-year fixed rate mortgage at only 3.49 per cent. There is no such thing as a free lunch, of course, and many of the most attractive looking deals carry quite steep signing-on fees and redemption penalties.

All the same, the outlook for borrowers has rarely looked so good. Standard Life Bank, a new entrant to the mortgage market, is offering a flexible variable rate mortgage at just 6.35 per cent with a discount of 2 per cent for the first six months. By the time that discount lapses, the variable rate is bound to be much lower. Savers fare less well in this downward spiral in interest rates, but you can't have everything, can you?

## Footsie touches new record as Wall St rallies

THE FTSE 100 raced ahead to touch a new record of 6,195.6, but later fell back to close at 6,147.2, up 46.0 on the day. The market was powered by a rally on Wall Street and excitement caused by renewed talk of mega-deals. The index of leading shares raced up to 6,184 in early trade, dropped back and then climbed again to hit its new high just after 2pm. But it failed to cling on.

The exuberant mood was sustained by rumours of a bid for Cable & Wireless by Deutsche Telekom. C&W stock initially leapt 89p in heavy volume and later closed at 888.5, up 9.2 per cent. Talk was that BT Alex Brown had been hired to offer Cable & Wireless to potential buyers at 1,050p per share. An emphatic denial by C&W did little to dampen enthusiasm.

The telecoms sector has already caught takeover fever in the wake of the bid battle for AirTouch, the US mobile operator, and unexpectedly good Christmas sales figures.

TORREX, the medical software systems specialist, rose 17 per cent as traders awoke to the fact it looks relatively recession-proof.

While many companies sell IT stocks to companies in cyclical sectors, Torrex's customer base is relatively robust. A strong "buy" note from the house broker, Beesom Gregory, also helped the shares to end up 15.5p at 103.5p.

The fever was infectious yesterday and temperatures rose at Orange, where shares jumped more than 5.5 per cent to hit 945p by the close. Orange's share price is now over 100p higher than it was during the go-go days of July last year.

As of last night it was outperforming the All-Share by 300 per cent. Telewest also caught the bug, rising 5.4 per cent to close at 216p.

Turnover was heavy: SEAG said more than 1 billion shares had been traded by the 4.30pm close. Following Wednesday's party, traders were relieved to see Wall Street rallying overnight. The rally continued when Wall Street opened at 2.30pm, albeit in a more temperate way. The Dow was up 48 points at 9585 by 4pm.

Mid and small-cap stocks predictably saw less of the action, with the FTSE 250 closing up 29.7 at 4976.4. The FTSE

### MARKET REPORT

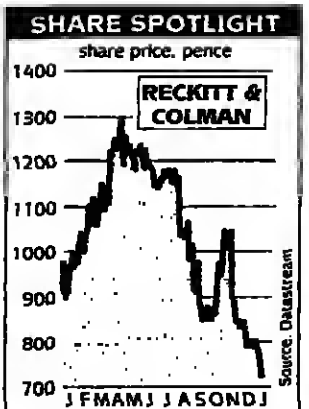


ANDREW VERITY

Small Cap index settled up 142 at 2133.8.

Brewers joined in the revelry as Marston, Thompson & Evershed launched its audacious takeover bid for Wolverhampton & Dudley. But the uncertainty over the outcome of the battle sowed some caution among traders. At 587p, the Marston bid would represent a 35 per cent premium, a cause for scepticism. Wolverhampton jumped nearly 20 per cent, or 72.5 points, to close at 510p.

Scottish & Newcastle raced ahead in sympathy with the takeover activity, jumping 37p to close at 745p. SFI Group, the UK pub operator that owns the Bar-Med brand, jumped 15.5p to 173p, celebrating its



style the news that like-for-like sales were up 5 per cent in the four weeks over Christmas.

Diageo jumped 40.5p, or 6.1 per cent, to 705.5p. It was helped by the generous sales price for rival food and drinks operator Cantrell & Cochrane. Standard Chartered rose 47p to 836p on news of a cut in Hong Kong's deposit rate.

Continued hopes of a takeover gave a renewed boost to Acorn, the computer group, which rose nearly 10 per cent to 113.5p. Somerfield, the struggling retailer, jumped 11p to 457.5p after Morgan Stanley reiterated its strong "buy" stance ahead of interim results. The Millennium, for once,

was a cause of optimism. Compass and Granada, both of which have secured big Millennium-related contracts, jumped 8.5 and 6 per cent respectively.

The party-poopers were few, but Reckitt & Colman, the household goods and textiles group, was not coming out to play. Credit Suisse First Boston slashed its forecasts over the next two years, causing Reckitt to tumble 34.5p to 720p by the close. Tomkins, the home-to-guns conglomerate, was another wallflower. Shareholders are nervous ahead of the group's results next week and analysts are known to be pressing for the group to sell its building, oil and concentrate on autoparts.

RMC group, the cement manufacturer, came crashing down as investors digested a profits warning. RMC said its business had been battered by a slump in demand for construction materials in Germany and Israel that would take a heavy toll on full-year

profits. Analysts are now predicting current-year profits of £285m at the most - at least £30m less than expected. The shares fell 50p to 693p.

Shares in retailers headed in different directions as the outcome of some crucial trading statements happened next week.

Kingfisher, in particular, must be wondering where Santa Claus went. The stock slid 26p to 666p on rumours that a trading statement next week would be gloomy. But the owner of Woolworths, B&Q, Comet and Superdrug is not as vulnerable as some think, according to Verdict, the respected UK retail consultancy. The stock may be oversold.

By contrast, Dixons, a direct competitor of Comet's, rose 2.5 per cent after Schroders reiterated its "add" recommendation. Other retailers, including Somerfield (up 12p to 458.5p), rose ahead of the market.

In London the FTSE 100 index ended 46 points higher at 6,147.2, having briefly touched a new high of 6,195.6 during the day.

Even adjusting yesterday's US figures for a 104,000 boost to construction employment from unseasonably warm December



Dawn Primarolo said the Government would outline proposals on tax incentives, along with other measures

### IN BRIEF

#### New mortgage offer takes £175m

STANDARD LIFE Bank, the banking subsidiary of Standard Life Insurance company, is set to take up to 10 per cent of the new mortgage market this year after taking 14,000 inquiries for its new cut-rate Freestyle mortgage offer, and lending £175m in the first five days after opening this week. It has also cut its mortgage rate from 6.8 to 6.55 per cent from Monday. New borrowers also get a 2 per cent discount for the first six months.

#### Allied Domecq

ALLIED DOMECQ is to sell off its Irish drinks business in a multi-million management buyout deal to be paid in euros. Cantrell & Cochrane, which makes and distributes Bulmers cider and Ballygowan water, is being sold to venture capital business BC Partners for 766m euros (£542m). The sale comes just seven months after Allied secured complete ownership of the Irish company by buying out Diageo's 49 per cent stake, which analysts then valued at around £230m.

#### Oil jobs axed

BP AMOCO is cutting 900 jobs in England and Scotland, about 1 per cent of its worldwide workforce, the newly formed Anglo-American giant said. The bulk of the cuts come from onshore exploration and production staff being reduced by about 500 in London and up to 200 in Aberdeen. Further worldwide job losses were expected.

## Labour plans tax breaks for R&D

GOVERNMENT PLANS to encourage more investment in research and development through tax breaks for businesses are to be unveiled later this month, the new Paymaster General, Dawn Primarolo, said yesterday.

Speaking at a productivity roadshow at the Nissan car plant in Sunderland, she said the Government would outline specific proposals to make existing tax incentives more user-friendly, along with new tax measures to stimulate R&D in small and medium-sized firms and encourage big firms to invest in smaller enterprises.

The package of measures is part of the Government's drive to close the 30 per cent productivity gap between British industry and its German, American and French rivals.

"The Government has shown its determination to tackle the UK's productivity challenge using all the levers at its disposal, including the tax system," Ms Primarolo said. "But to do so effectively, it needs the help of business to inform the debate and design effective policies."

The Paymaster General said the Government would need to weigh up the cost-effectiveness of specific measures involving tax breaks. That would require a level-headed assessment of their impact on business innovation and enterprise. Apart from tax incentives, the Government is also keen to foster the concept of "corporate venturing" whereby large companies invest in and form partnerships with smaller enterprises. Ms Primarolo said the Government would examine what scope there was to "kick-start" this kind of activity.

Other initiatives being taken

to raise productivity include a review of the banking sector; plans to widen employee share ownership and simplification of the tax treatment of intellectual property.

The Nissan site was chosen for the fourth in a series of joint Treasury/Department of Trade and Industry productivity roadshows because it is the most efficient car plant in Europe, producing three times as many vehicles per man as Rover's Longbridge plant.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, signalled in his pre-Budget report that closing the productivity gap would be one of the Government's top priorities. He cited it as a fundamental long-term weakness of the British economy. Work carried out by the management consultants McKinsey shows that UK productivity lags the US by 40 per cent and Germany by at least 20 per cent.

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## Buoyant US economy boosts shares

THE US economy defied all expectations of a steady slowdown when key figures yesterday revealed a staggering jump of 378,000 in the number of new jobs last month, writes Diane Coyle. The unemployment rate dipped back to its 30-year low of 4.3 per cent.

The surprising buoyancy helped share prices climb further. By mid-morning the Dow Jones index was up nearly 55 points at 9,592.35. The dollar gained against the euro and the yen. It reversed a dip below 110 yen on Thursday to climb above 112 yen.

In London the FTSE 100 index ended 46 points higher at 6,147.2, having briefly touched a new high of 6,195.6 during the day.

Even adjusting yesterday's US figures for a 104,000 boost to construction employment from unseasonably warm December

weather, the rise in the non-farm payrolls total was well above analysts' expectations.

The news, following strong reports on the post-Christmas sales and the housing market earlier in the week, dimmed any remaining hopes for a further interest rate cut.

## THE INDEPENDENT

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## SPORT

## A fight for the soul of rugby



**Tony O'Reilly, who won 29 caps for Ireland and scored a record-breaking 38 tries for the Lions, fears that the unique appeal of rugby union is under threat in the professional era**

PETER KINIMONTH, a former captain of Scotland, said in ancient times: "We don't have much money, but we do have fun." The opposite may now be the case. The game which was played for recreation, pleasure, some exercise and fleeting moments of glory has now become a professional sport. In consequence, it has changed in ways that are good, in ways that are bad, and in some ways that are as yet incalculable. Most importantly, the future of this once Corinthian game is today up for very public debate.

Put simply, rugby football at the highest level is now seen as a professional calling with all that implies in terms of contractual obligations, demands for performance, critical crowds, the potentiality for great rewards for some players and an alarming feeling of instability that appears to permeate player, official, and, to a degree, spectator alike.

First the game, played at its best, many of the rule changes today have been enormously beneficial. However, the assisted jump and the pointlessness of fighting for possession make line-outs and loose rucks merely a means of restarting the game against your opponents. Their reaction is the rugby league one of stringing defenders across the field, as Australia did so brilliantly against England in the final of the World Cup in 1991, and all the while hoping for some breakdown to give a scouting try to their fast runners.

The gladiatorial clash of players, who seem startlingly larger than I recall them, can be as boring as its rugby league counterpart. The loose ruck (Colin Meads once told me that a loose ruck could go on for three months in New Zealand), the forward rush and dribble, the swerve and the sidestep, the desire to beat your opposite number by eluding him, is no longer part of the main game. Running into a man rather than away from him is the new bible of rugby. The aim is to get yourself in a position where, with a three-to-two or a two-to-one overlap, you will score by straight running.

Much of this is very virtuous and there are aspects which I would enjoy greatly in the modern game, but there is a real danger that, as tactics improve, the defender may gain the upper hand, and the glory of the game as a running spectacle may be somewhat diminished.

All of this, however, is remediable. In contrast, there is a great danger that the unique spirit of rugby football and the collegiality of its clubs may be lost in a welter of accusations and counter-accusations that makes the Middle East look like a relative haven of calm.

The nature of the problems are extraordinary. We have large English clubs accusing their own Rugby

Union of exerting too much control. You have the International Rugby Board chastising the Rugby Football Union for the action of its clubs, whose own actions seek to damage the very Union that defends it. You have a European Cup without the English clubs. You have players whose loyalties are divided between country, province and club, and you have a potential unilateral declaration of independence by the RFU and television from the other Unions, which challenges the very financial lifeblood of the game.

In this maelstrom of imputation and counter-statement, one thing is quite clear: rugby clubs cannot afford to pay the escalating playing salaries (and now transfer fees) of the players if they are to continue. The combination of gates and television receipts are simply insufficient to match the outflows associated with all the principal clubs. Almost every major club will report a loss this year. The losses can only grow because the game, although popular at the international level, will never have the support at the domestic level that a club requires to pay all its bills. This applies as much to Leicester, one of my old clubs and a very successful one too, as it does to Dolphin or Old Belvedere, another two of my old clubs. There will be no Manchester United in rugby football.

A partial solution would be the one aired by Dan Rooney, the president and owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers, in London two years ago at a conference organised by Rugby News. He advocated a cap on the amount each club could pay all its players, as operated in the United States in American Football. It has the effect of equalising competition for good players throughout the country and making cost and expense equate to one another. If the cap is £2m and a club wishes to pay £2m for one player, it would have to pay nothing for the other 14 or 20 players, as the case may be. The contrast between the figures paid for baseball and basketball players and those paid in American Football would make instructive reading for all club treasurers in the rugby-playing world.

In short, rugby football should not be the province of a small handful of individuals or clubs, but should be in the trusteeship and affordable ownership of all committed people, in large and small clubs throughout the world. This gives the game its unique appeal.

On the thorny issue of contracts, I believe that although the basic contract should be with the clubs, the additional cash flow must be from the independent Rugby Unions through their very large revenues from gate receipts and TV payments for internationals, and



Nelson Mandela presents the winners' trophy to Francois Pienaar, the South Africa captain, after the 1995 World Cup final in Johannesburg

Reuters

paid by agreement to the clubs after allowing for the Unions' own development and administrative expenses. Most importantly, there should be a commonality of purpose between the Unions and the clubs as to the performance of that country in international competition, and the contracts should reflect that.

In Ireland, the clubs in all their vigour, loyalty, fun and diversity must be encouraged by the Rugby Union to flourish. While there will be contracts at club level, the primary contracts should be with the provinces and the national squad, and the provinces should have the right to represent Ireland in the European League and Cup, if that be the final structure agreed upon by all the Unions.

Finally, the issue of competition has reduced itself to an absurdity with the English clubs pulling out of the European Cup. Whether you have a European Cup and League or simply a European Cup, all the best clubs and provinces in the five

nations – and beyond, if justified – should participate to ensure maximum spectator appeal. The fact that Ravenhill in Belfast will cater for a crowd of more than 20,000 people for the European Cup semi-final against Stade Français today is an eloquent testimony to the pulling power of European competition. The very least we should

*Rugby football should be in the trusteeship and affordable ownership of all committed people, in large and small clubs throughout the world*

have is a European Cup and that, as Bath showed in winning it last season, can be an enormous attraction. Again, the financial results of such a tournament should be divided equitably by the Unions among all those clubs who, by their excellence, make such a competition possible.

In the final analysis, rugby football is a game in which the interna-

tional occasion should be preserved in a manner that underlines its scarcity rather than its superabundance. The Five Nations' Championship has been part of the rugby calendar for almost 100 years. To do away with it or to devalue it would be both a financial insanity and a major defeat for the growing but still measured popularity of the

changes, so do disparities disappear, and my feeling is that the World Cup in 1999 may see a more level playing field in this regard than before. So, in a nutshell, what I am saying is that the International Rugby Board and the individual Unions must continue to be the centre-piece of a growing world game. Individuals and clubs bent upon their own (and in most cases very justifiable) ends, or television companies whose constant responsibility is the search for a wider audience, should not be the determinants for the future of this great game.

I might add in saying this that the IRB will have to be a lot more consumer-friendly in many of its activities to garner the democratic support needed from all world followers. The same is true of the separate Rugby Unions of the individual countries. They are the servants of the spectator, the game and the player, and, in being given the authority to run the game, need to be reminded constantly by

the press and the media of their trusteeship.

Golf, that most universal of games run by the Royal & Ancient club from St Andrews, and Wimbledon, the greatest of all tennis tournaments, demonstrate that an efficient and effective organisation does not need to be a major cost centre for the game.

If half of this is accomplished, then we would have a great Five Nations' Championship, a return to the vivacity and enjoyment that characterised the game at very level in the past and a very good World Cup at the end of this millennium year.

Cliff Morgan, that magical fly-half from Wales, once said that "rugby football sweats the vice out of a man". Let's hope that similar sentiment at the corporate level yields a game that in its future promise matches its storied and glorious past.

Dr Tony O'Reilly is Chairman of Independent Newspapers, which owns The Independent, and is a qualified solicitor

## Hill still taking it on the chin 28 years later

LET ME first say that Jimmy Hill deserves eternal credit for his key role in effecting the abolition of the maximum wage for professional footballers.

Let me add that the enterprising style of management he displayed in taking Coventry City into the First Division in the late 1960s was a model for its times.

Right. Having got that out of the way, I feel free to... oh no I don't. Not quite.

Chin. I say this because the word is always mentioned in connection with Hill, and even though I have no particular view on it I don't want to miss out. Chin. There you are. I've said it again.

So now – over the past 30 years, Hill's comments about the game, first on ITV, then BBC – have



**MIKE ROWBOTTOM**

aggravated me beyond reason. Like his fellow panellists Terry Venables and more recently Alan Hansen, I have found his dogged assertions hard to bear. Like Aarfy in "Catch 22", nothing can alter his benign certainty in his own

ineffable wisdom. Shout at him, pound him with your flagging fists – it won't do any good.

And even that is not the thing I find most unforgivable about Jimmy Hill.

Excuse me a moment while I compose myself.

Okay. It is 1971, and Arsenal, under the guidance of their commanding officer, Bertie Mee, and barking sergeant major Don Howe, are closing on the first League and Cup double since Tottenham's a decade earlier.

In the run-up to the FA Cup final, Hill takes it upon himself to devise a new means of rallying the Highbury supporters. A song. Why? Too late, the thought is, and verses penned by the bearded bard – that chin does come in useful. I have to say – appear in the papers

as if they were a new poem by Rudyard Kipling.

"Good Old Arsenal, We're proud to say the name, While we sing this song we'll win The Game..." to the tune of "Rule Britannia".

There comes a point when words cannot support the weight of meaning invested in them... But let's press on.

I don't blame Hill for this. What am I saying? Of course I bloody blame him for it. The song still infects my memory. But I can't blame him entirely.

I felt sure that every sensible Arsenal fan would make it their personal mission never to utter a syllable of this dire ditty. Sadly, I was mistaken.

Young minds were manipulated at a particularly vulnerable time of their season. Jimmy's awful big

adventure into the world of terrace culture proved disastrously successful.

What distressed me most about the exercise was its blandness, its plinking predictability. It was a manufactured mess for the masses, missing (what a lot of m's indignation provokes) the warp and weft (Who! Goos all wibbly-wobbly now) of naturally-occurring terrace chants.

Round about this time, the team I saw most of in real life was our nearest League outfit, Watford. The season before Arsenal's Double, the Second Division side had beaten Stoke City and then, famously, Liverpool, en route to a 5-1 FA Cup semi-final defeat by Chelsea.

A particular favourite Watford song of mine concerned their unpredictable forward, Rodney Green.

To the tune of "Quartermaster Stores", we had: "He's up, he's down, he's in the Rose and Crown, Rodney Green, Rodney Green." There was, as it happened, a Rose and Crown pub in nearby Croydon Green.

Well, it worked for us.

Then there was this offering, widely sung before a Cup meeting with Manchester United: "We all agree, Slater is better than Yashin, Scullion is better than Eusebio, United you're in for a thrashing..." I made the mistake of watching the 1971 FA Cup final on television with my friend Taffy Reynolds, an Arsenal supporter. Before the match kicked off, I got a first-hand glimpse of the damage Hill had wrought on impressionable youth when Taffy's younger brother, Jonathan, sang the song repeatedly and with apparent satisfaction.

After Charlie George's extra-time goal had settled the whole shooting match in favour of the north Londoners, Taffy, flushed with success, bellowed the Hill anthem repeatedly in my face with only a faint sense of irony.

At that point, I felt sure I would have been able to argue in any court, the song was a weapon, an instrument of abuse.

"That's rubbish," I can imagine an insistent voice insisting. Doggedly insisting, with a fixed smile, and a faintly jutting you-know-what, until I'm properly told, "Rubbish. It's just a piece of harmless fun. Your prejudices are showing."

"Good Old Arsenal", with new words from Jimmy Hill, reached No 16 in the charts in the summer of 1971. God preserve us all.



European Cup: Neglected Pool-Jones is primed to impress for French at Ravenhill today

# England exile has Paris at his feet

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S evocative celebration of Paris as a "moveable feast" clearly struck a chord with Richard Pool-Jones, who has been gorging himself on its splendours for three wonderfully stimulating years. Armed with an economics degree from Toulouse University and enough French to recognise his Truffauts from his truffles, England's most successful expat rugby nut finds himself in the middle of a personal belle époque. He runs a printing business with a multi-million Euro turnover, he is in the process of moving into a flat in the swanky seventh arrondissement - "Aim for the Eiffel Tower and you'll be in the right neighbourhood" - and, most impressively of all, he has cemented his place in the strongest club side on the planet, which is more than can be said for half-a-dozen Test-playing Tricolores.

And yet, the 29-year-old Stade Français flanker remains unfulfilled. To the best of his knowledge, neither Clive Woodward nor anyone else from the England hierarchy has watched him play since he half-killed himself in the national cause in Rotorua almost seven months ago. "Out of sight, out of mind," he says sadly. "It seems to me that no matter what I do here in France, however well I play, I'm seen as someone from a totally different world. I'd love to have to another chance with England; in all modesty, if I'm making the starting line-up here, I'm playing as near to Test level as makes no difference. For whatever reason, though, it's not happening for me on the England front."

It is, then, wholly understandable that he should see this afternoon's momentous European Cup semi-final with Ulster as an occasion shot through with personal significance. He does not for a moment expect any Twickenham big-wigs to be in attendance, but such is the excitement surrounding the match that every rugby man worth his salt will beg, borrow or steal a tape of proceedings at Ravenhill. The way Pool-Jones figures it, Belfast is the nearest he is likely to get to Woodward's line of vision this side of the World Cup.

On the face of it, his brief flurry of red rose activity last summer was hardly an unmitigated success; after winning his first cap among the romper-suited

BY CHRIS HEWETT

babes in arms humiliated 76-0 by Australia in Brisbane, he managed only a further 28 minutes against the New Zealand Maoris before being invalided off the tour. In reality, he was one of the few to emerge from that calamitous five-week ball-up with his reputation intact. If his defensive effort against the Wallabies was inspired - an impression underlined by the fact that during his 14-minute visit to the blood-bin in the first half, England went from 0-6 to 9-33 - his crimson-tinged assault on the Maoris was brave to the point of insanity. They did for him in the end, of course, but at least he went down fighting.

Professionalism was confidently expected to put an end to off-the-wall iconoclasts like Pool-Jones, whose rugby wanderings have taken him from England Under-18s and the Varsity Match to the blood-soaked hull ring of Stade Français' Jean Bouin Stadium, via Biarritz, where he enjoyed the immeasurable privilege of playing in Serge Blanco's last match, and Wasps, where he spent a dissolute few months nursing a knackered knee.

Even now, embroiled as he is in the most competitive playing environment anywhere in the northern hemisphere, he manages to mix sport and business to the satisfaction of all concerned. What is more, he still gets out in the evening. "Only two or three times a week, mind you, but you can't live like a monk in Paris, can you?" he points out, entirely reasonably. "I don't suppose professional players will get the opportunity to live this sort of life four or five years from now, but I find it manageable."

"I'm not a nine-to-five rugby sort and I don't suppose I ever will be: the Stade Français squad often trains at 10.30 in the morning and that gives me enough time to fit in a business meeting beforehand. The fact that the club is so successful - we've had crowds of 20,000 this season - and that I'm out there playing has definitely opened a few doors in the business world. I'm looking to bring a few club-mates into the company to help all the inter-connections continue once I stop playing."

Which will not be for some considerable time yet. Pool-Jones, who lost two complete seasons to injury and to this day has played only 21 French league games in five years,



Richard Pool-Jones, the Stade Français flanker, in action in one of his rare England appearances

Allsport

finds the Stade Français buzz gloriously addictive. Bankrolled by the Parisian mega mogul Max Guazzini and positively smothered with Test-class talent, the club is among the sexiest sporting attractions anywhere in France - on mean achievement for a rugby outfit in the land of the football world

Castres - most of us were resting up for Ulster - and it included Marc Lievreumont, a Grand Slam flanker last season, and the whole Simon-Moscato-Gimbert front row that everyone assumed was our number one unit at the start of the European Cup tournament. Franck Comba, another recent

If we were playing a top English side with a cup final place at stake, we could not conceivably be any more serious than we are about this game. Sure, I'd have loved to have mixed it with the English in this year's tournament; their boycott has probably cost me personally in that it denied me the opportunity of playing in the shop window against Neil Back or Richard Hill. But Stade Français are in the tournament and the Cup is there to be won. You're either European champions or you're not. In five years' time, who will remember the boycott?"

Not for the first time, Pool-Jones will perform a fistful of roles this afternoon, acting not merely as open-side flanker but as go-between, negotiator, translator and apologist for his club-mates as they attempt to deal with a fired-up band of ultra-physical Ulstermen, a frenzied atmosphere and a referee in the authoritarian shape

of Scotland's own Jim Fleming. "Our discipline is the big factor, because we certainly have the skills to win this match," he says. "The French are generally at a disadvantage in that they rarely, if ever, have the luxury of one of their own officials in a cross-border fixture. And let's be honest: British referees see French club rugby in a very poor light and understandably so. It can still be very violent, especially in the sticks. I think I'll be fairly busy out there on the pitch, one way or another."

Whether Pool-Jones executes his many responsibilities with sufficient pizzazz to re-awaken Woodward's dormant interest is a seriously moot point. Life has its little consolations, though. As Hemingway said: "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you."

*'The English boycott has denied me the opportunity of playing in the shop window against Neil Back or Richard Hill'*

champions. "It is," agrees Pool-Jones, "an astonishing set-up. Sebastian Viers [the former France wing] said recently that it's harder to get picked by Stade Français than it is by France and, without being funny, I think he's dead right."

"Look at last weekend, for instance. We fielded what amounted to a second team at Test player, can't get in at centre because Cliff Mytton is playing better rugby than anyone. That's the measure of the standard here. We even win away from home in the French championship, which is not really the traditional way of going about things in this country."

"Still, all that will mean nothing if we get it wrong in Belfast."

## Gallic goliaths await Humphreys' Ulster

IT WOULD BE stretching a point to describe Ravenhill as an oasis of rugby sanity, especially when 20,000 Ulstermen are preparing to give Stade Français the mother and father of all ear-bashings in this afternoon's perfectly poised European Cup semi-final.

But this much can safely be predicted: for 80 wind-swept minutes in Belfast, passion will temporarily replace politics as the common currency of a game slowly sinking in a quicksand of greed, chicanery and naked self-interest. In short, it will be a sight for sore eyes.

The English clubs' boycott of this season's championship remains the most desperate of many tactical errors in their ongoing conflict with rugby offside. It is in the shape of the International Board, the Rugby Football Union or European Rugby Cup Ltd, those far from blameless administrators whose shambolic stewardship of the competition would be enough to make a parson swear. If the English pulled out on the basis that there could be no half-decent tournament without them, they were badly mistaken. Ulster, ironically reinforced by a bat-

ter of Allied Dunbar Premiership refugees, have made a glorious scrap of the thing by dumping Toulouse on their well-appointed Gallic backside en route to the last four.

David Humphreys, the former London Irish outside-half who has captained Ulster throughout their European adventure in the absence of Mark McCall, is almost unnaturally modest in his assessment of his province's timely renaissance as a major power in northern hemisphere rugby. "I think it's too simplistic to put our improvement down to the return of the Premiership contingent," he insists. "The thing that has struck me most deeply this season is the performance of people like Gary Longwell, our lock, and Tony McWhirter, our flanker, who have played all their senior rugby here."

For all that, it is to Humphreys, Simon Mason, Jon Bell and Allen Clarke that Ulster will look this afternoon, for no one comes within a bull's roar of beating Stade Français, the overwhelming favourites, without maximising every ounce of available talent, experience, and general know-how. "We'll play with all the Irishness associated with Ulster and, yes,

I'll put the ball in the air a few times, just to see how the French react," conceded Humphreys, very much the form horse at No 10 as Ireland approach the Five Nations Championship. "But we know we'll need to offer more than that; we're taking a big step up the hill in playing this lot."

This afternoon's winners will face either Colomiers, last year's European Conference champions, or Perpignan, the Basque side who boast Raphael Ibanez, the French national captain, at hooker and the brilliant Thomas Lievreumont at No 8. The two meet in the suburbs of Toulouse tomorrow, as do four other French sides in the semi-finals of the second-tier European Shield. Brive visit Bourgoin in the first match, with Montferrand hosting Narbonne in the second.

Welsh Rugby Union officials are expected to confirm Pontypridd and Llanelli as two of their four European Cup representatives next year; indeed, they plan to invest around £500,000 in each to help strengthen their squads. Rebel clubs Cardiff and Swansea would be the other choices, but both are still locked in their on-going dispute with the governing body.

## Worcester prepare for a cold reception

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

steps away from Twickenham," said coach John Mitchell. "which is a huge motivation."

Saints suffered a surprise home defeat to London Irish in midweek, costing them the outright leadership of the Premiership. "We've studied the video but we still can't understand why we lost," said their captain, Tim Rodber.

League Two South leaders Esler took their players to the panto to watch a production of Jack and the Beanstalk this week. The trip is unlikely to help them much against Harlequins, who have won eight of their last nine Premiership matches.

Sedgley Park (Jewson League Two North) will preface their tie against Wasps with the official opening of their hospitality suites, fitness centre and refurbished dressing rooms, probably the only good thing to happen to them on the day. And it will be a similar story for Barking - Jeff Probyn and all - at Leicester.

Tomorrow Kendal are at home to an injury-hit London Scottish, who are at the lower end of the First Division. And Henley, who are second in Jewson League One, will put up

a fight when they visit Bedford, struggling on and off the field in the Premiership. Henley are in formidable form, having scored 51 tries while conceding 17.

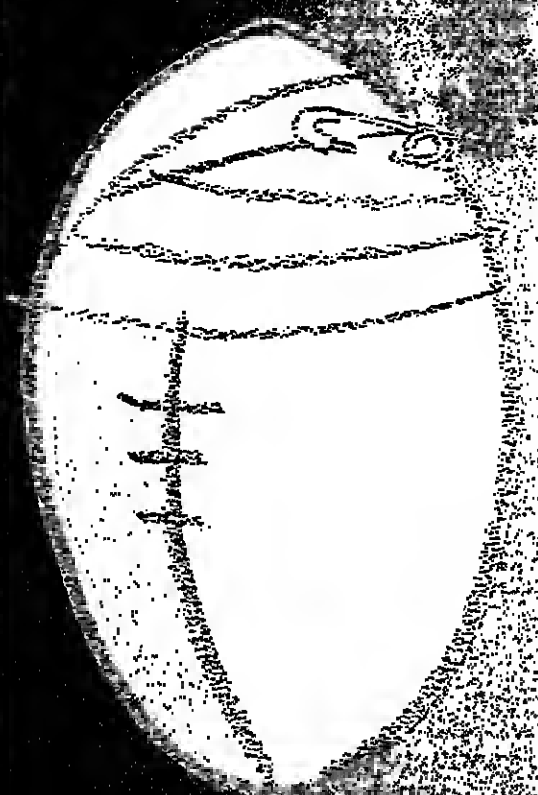
Jewson One side Morley host Saracens, who have made sweeping changes to the side which drew with Wasps in midweek. That includes giving a first-team debut to tight-head prop Jonathan Dawson, an England Under-21 international.

London Irish are without dynamic No 8 Isaac Feanati and Peter Rogers, both suffering from knee injuries, but they should still have few problems at Second Division Bristol and expect a similar story at Reading where Richmond tackle Newbury of Jewson One.

In Wales, Cardiff will be looking to avenge last month's defeat in the unofficial Anglo-Welsh match against Swansea when they entertain the All Whites at the Arms Park.

Pontypridd have made a bid to bring Will Carling to Wales. The former England captain is being targeted by the 1997 Welsh champions with Eddie Jones, the club's manager, saying: "I have spoken to his agent and he told me that Will would look at the idea. We would have him here tomorrow if he said yes."

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## Native looks powerful ally

By GREG WOOD

IT IS not often that anyone wishes for more rain in Ireland, but by this evening punters on both sides of the sea may be cursing the fact that an extra inch or two did not fall on Leopardstown this week. On Tuesday, the going on the hurdles course was heavy and the forecast poor, putting today's Ladbroke Hurdle in doubt. The rain did not materialise, though, and 25 runners go to post for one of the most unpredictable events in the calendar.

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
Nap: Call It A Day  
(Sandown 3.05)  
NB: Mlt And Run  
(Sandown 12.55)

Even by its standards, today's Ladbroke is daunting. The ground is bottomless and the field handicapped to finish in a multiple dead-heat, while the tight inner hurdles course at Leopardstown will wreak its usual havoc on a tightly-bunched field which goes a strong pace all the way.

None the less, most punters will dabble, and Advocate, the ante-post favourite, will remain a popular choice. Noel Meade's principal hope from several top handicaps, including a fifth place in this race last year, but he will need to have improved, and at nine, that seems unlikely. Impulsive Devine is another leading fancy, but he too is old and exposed, and more appeal rests with Slaney Native 2.20. Jessica Harrington's runner was a solid third behind Joe Mac, the best two-mile novice in Ireland, last time out, and runs off a fair handicap mark.

With Haydock abandoned, the Cazale/Midway Chase at Sandown is the interest in Britain, as the Welsh National winner, Kendal Cavalier, attempts to confirm that form



Richard Guest and Carley Lad part company at the second-last fence in the Ladbroke Handicap Chase at Towcester yesterday as the eventual third, Burnt Imp, gallops past. The race was won by Majors Legacy

against Eudipe and Dom Samourai, who ran no race at Chepstow. That was an impressive performance by Kendal Cavalier, who carried 11lb more than his true handicap weight, but relished the deep ground and extended trip to outstay his rivals, marking himself down as a contender for the Grand National in the process. The conditions today may not place such an emphasis on stamina, however, and while Chit-rakka 2.00, too, is difficult to oppose. There is more to consider in the getting out race, though, not least some of the splendid names of the runners, which include Tellaporky, Royrace and I Do The Jokes.

## Edmondson strikes again

RICHARD EDMONDSON yesterday extended his lead at the top of the Racing Post table for newspaper tipsters when Spa Hill won at 9-2. A £1 daily stake on Edmondson's nap this jumps season has yielded a profit of £37.18.

It is difficult to suggest any reason why Edmondson should not win the Towthorpe (Novices) Hurdle, a fact which will be reflected in his price, and Knrakka 2.00, too, is difficult to oppose. There is more to consider in the getting out race, though, not least some of the splendid names of the runners, which include Tellaporky, Royrace and I Do The Jokes.

The most likely winner, though, is UPHAM LORD (nap 3.40), who found the ground too soft and the distance too far at Newbury last week. Today's conditions are ideal.

## Huntingdon bows out

LORD HUNTINGDON'S career as a trainer, which began in 1976, is over. The trainer who has been based at the West Illey stables of the Queen, will not be renewing his licence next month and had hoped to sign off with Browning, who is now lame, in today's Armagh Handicap at Lingfield.

"My first runner, Better Blessed, was a winner," Huntingdon said, "and my last two, Just Wiz at Southwell on Saturday and Violet on Wednesday

both won as well. I'll have a sabbatical and see what happens." Huntingdon's winners for the Queen included the Royal Hunt Cup with Colour Sergeant in 1992 and the Ribblesdale Stakes and St Simon Stakes in 1995 with Phantom Gold. He also saddled Indian Queen (1991) and Drum Taps (1992 and 1993) to win the Ascot Gold Cup. Heavy rain has caused the abandonment of today's meeting at Haydock Park which was due to be televised by the BBC.

## LINGFIELD

HYPERION  
12.50 Royal Roulette 1.20 Tribal Peace 1.55  
Catchthebeat 2.25 Dream On Me 3.00 Staro  
Heights 3.30 Sammy's Shuffle

GOING: Standard.  
STALLS: 51 - outside; remainder - inside.  
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low numbers best up to 71.  
EQUINITY: Average, left-hand, sharp undulating course.  
COURSE: 55 of 60, on 6000, Lingfield station (served by London, Victoria, and Underground; One enclosure for CAR PARK; Club; remainder for 5000).

**1.55 TRACKSIDE CARRY CLASSIFIED STAKES (CLASS D) £2,750 added 3yo 5f**  
1 GRASSLAND (10) (J) A Newcombe 8.0... J. Quinn 2  
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## WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION  
7.00 Murrab 7.30 State Wind 8.00 Festive  
8.30 Scarlett's Boy 9.00 Bonna Ville 9.30  
Pipe Music

GOING: Standard.  
STALLS: 71 - outside; remainder - inside.  
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low best.  
EQUINITY: Average, left-hand, sharp undulating course.  
COURSE: 55 of 60, on 6000, Lingfield station (served by London, Victoria, and Underground; One enclosure for CAR PARK; Club; remainder for 5000).

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## LEOPARDSTOWN

HYPERION  
1.45 Lord Heavens  
2.20 Sawe-ld

GOING: Heavy.  
Left-handed flat track. Run-in 200yds.  
LEADING TRAINERS: A. P. O'Brien (15%), A. L. Moore (13%), P. O'Brien (12%), J. P. O'Brien (11%), J. P. O'Brien (10%), J. P. O'Brien (9%), J. P. O'Brien (8%), J. P. O'Brien (7%), J. P. O'Brien (6%), J. P. O'Brien (5%), J. P. O'Brien (4%), J. P. O'Brien (3%), J. P. O'Brien (2%), J. P. O'Brien (1%).

**1.45 PIERCE LEOPARDSTOWN HANDICAP (CLASS D) £22,750 added 3m**  
1 ROYAL ROULETTE (10) (J) M. S. S. 8.0... J. Quinn 2  
2 TRIBAL PEACE (10) (J) M. S. S. 8.0... J. Quinn 2  
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Triangular tournament: Australia and Sri Lanka promise stern examination of England's World Cup potential

# Limited relief for Wells and Alleyne

FORGET A SILLY little thing like the Ashes. The campaign leading towards the real contest that matters in cricket begins adjacent to a building site in Brisbane tomorrow. If that offends the purist supporters of a revered institution they should be reminded that the Gabba, once a ground bordering on the quaint, now seems to be in a state of permanent reconstruction aimed at taking it into the millennium.

No doubt they harbour similar feelings about the length of time a game of cricket should last, five days being good and anything below becoming progressively worse. Test cricket, of which the Ashes series remains the most treasured example, possesses more nuances and greater skills, while the one-day stuff is treated as mere froth, a necessary diversion. But this misses the point: that limited-overs cricket, while not always a thrill-a-minute (but, then, neither are Test matches), has developed its own singular skills, particularly in batting and fielding. If the bowling needs to be worked on, doubtless some countries are already doing so.

The Carlton & United Triangular Competition, in which England play their first match against Australia tomorrow, promises to be entertaining enough – not least because Sri Lanka are the other team involved – and it is also a key part of England's preparations for the World Cup, which begins at home in May. Let there be no mistake that if England somehow win the World Cup it will do more for the game than would regaining the Ashes. It will capture the imagination, it will throw up heroes and its blazing immediacy will be part of the reason. Never mind nuances.

True, the snuffy brigade have been handed more ammunition by the allegations of betting, bribery, match-fixing and the inquiries now being conducted in both Pakistan and Australia. Whatever the outcome of these there has clearly been sharp practice and it would be as well if the International Cricket Council – who meet in Christchurch, New Zealand, next week – start to attend to the issue instead of ignoring it.

The nefarious activities

BY STEPHEN BRENKLEY  
in Brisbane

associated with the shorter international form of the game, however, also serve to demonstrate its immense popularity. Not only does that apply in the sub-continent, where the bookmakers and bettors are in abundance, but in South Africa, where it has become beloved of a growing army of female spectators, and in Australia, where it was effectively invented.

England, being sniffer than most, have been wary of clasp ing it to their bosom. They talk of admiring innovation in others but have usually avoided the practice themselves. There are, it is said, far too many one-day internationals. Well, not where England are concerned. They managed 11 in all of last year while playing 16 Test matches. It was a touching gesture towards tradition but it was a schedule which might not have been designed to hone them for the World Cup.

The pitches they will encounter in Australia in the next six weeks and at least 10 matches (13 if they reach the final) will be somewhat different from those that will greet them in England in May, but the bearing on the World Cup squad is still overwhelming. New players like Vince Wells and Mark Alleyne, who have waited years for this sort of recognition, are now in the most favourable of positions to claim a place in the biggest tournament of all.

David Graveney, England's chairman of selectors, who is also their manager for this series, rejected suggestions that England are still no nearer to knowing their men for May, a suspicion founded on the evidence of the number of players

who have worn their fetching blue, almost turquoise, shirt lately. "I would say maybe three-quarters of the players in Australia will be there when we name our squad for the World Cup by the end of March," he said. "Other places may depend on conditions as well as form but, yes, players such as Vince Wells can get themselves into the World Cup in the next six weeks."

One of the places being frequently questioned is that of Ben Hollis. Put simply, the achievement and the progress have failed to match the hype and expectation. He burst on to the scene two years ago with two marvellous innings at Lord's, a joyous 63 against Australia on his international debut followed by a wonderfully mature 98 for Surrey in the Benson and Hedges Cup final. "I've had a word with him and told him he can't continue to live on two innings," said Graveney. "They were a long time ago now." If the chairman of selectors is saying that you are in trouble then it is to be hoped Hollis can emerge from his present slough of despondency which is affecting all aspects of his game. Apart from anything else, he reduces the average age of the squad considerably.

According to Graveney, England's one-day strategy has been evolving since the famous victory in the Champions' Trophy in the autumn of 1997. In that competition they won all four matches which seemed to herald a fresh start. Unfortunately, they have lost eight of the 11 since. They have abandoned the idea of pinch-hitting for the sake of it and have begun to clarify their views on all-rounders, otherwise known more disparagingly as "bits

and pieces" players. Either they will use them or they won't.

It is likely that the betting will be based largely on the platform of the breathtaking opening of Nick Knight and the enduring middle-order ability of Neil Fairbrother to accumulate rapid and, to the opposition, irritating singles and twos. If they pick three front-line seamers in Australia this month – Darren Gough, Dean Headley and Alan Mullally – they will surely pick them on greener pitches.

England can expect no respite with the Ashes series done. Australia's one-day squad is clearly settled. Their selectors have ignored the obvious claims of the likes of the ebullient Michael Slater and the wicket-taking leg-spinner Stuart MacGill and stuck with conclusions they had already reached. But the decision to appoint Shane Warne as captain while Steve Waugh recovers from a hamstring injury has not been greeted with universal approval.

Mind you, the impression is that those commentators who object have done so not only because of the recent revelation that Warne was once foolish enough to accept a gift from an Indian bookmaker in return for information on pitches but because he bleaches his hair. Do not assume all the staid attitudes belong solely to and in England.

If Australia have a position in the batting over which to ponder it is at No 7 now that the veteran Tom Moody has finally been ejected, but they will make plenty of runs before then. Sri Lanka have arrived in dreadful form after losing badly in Sharjah recently but then they came to England after a poor run last year and won. Mischievously, they make much of the pressure of being world champions but they manage still to prosper in the bigger matches. However, their strength in depth is suspect and the injury to the great Aravinda de Silva, forced to retire hurt in a warm-up match against Australia yesterday, will concern them.

England will start the Carlton series as underdogs – a well-worn label they would do well to rise above.



Vince Wells plays a reverse sweep during England's defeat of Queensland at the Gabba yesterday Ian Waldie

## Knight's height of fashion

THEY ARE unfashionable players with counties to match.

Four months ago the suggestion that Mark Alleyne and Vince Wells might appear in an England team – separately, let alone together – would have been greeted with amused tolerance, as indeed it had been by generations of selectors.

Any notion that they might not only play but make substantial and lively contributions measured precisely to the demands of the team and the state of the game might have brought the men in white coats round for a visit. Thus reputations are developed and stick in the face of both the facts and worthy recommendations. That is fashion.

It was other men in white coats, of course, namely most of the first-class umpires, who had been hanging on for years about the unheralded and overlooked virtues of the all-rounders from Gloucestershire and Leicestershire. Since Wells is 33 years old and Gloucester stalwart Alleyne is 30 their time was less running out than up, but last September the present selection panel at last heeded the evidence and

BY STEPHEN BRENKLEY  
at the Gabba

England 324-6  
Queensland 232  
England win by 92 runs

picked them for the winter one-day matches.

With the remnants of the Test side yet to come back, it is still unsure what parts they will take when the serious stuff begins in the internationals tomorrow, but yesterday here their form was resplendent against Queensland Bulls. England won by 92 runs in as sustained an exhibition of pleasing cricket as they can have mustered all four. Wells, at the beginning of England's innings, and Alleyne, at its end, ensured a target which was attainable by the state side only in the event of dreams, an inexcusable England bowling performance or an immense innings from the Australian side's captain.

Essex's favourite overseas player Stuart Law (although, upon reflection, the last two in that list were not outside the bounds of possibility).

As the match was petering out, Alleyne came on as the sev-

enth bowler, took a wicket with his first ball, aided by a Wells boundary catch, another with his second and finished with 4 for 6 from 14 balls. This might have been considered meritorious enough for the man of the match award. Wells, who was not granted a bowl, edged him out in front of 17,000 spectators who delighted in the drama unfolding before them.

England won the toss, an occurrence as rare as handsome victories this winter, and Wells opened the batting with Nick Knight. They put on 128 in 19 overs and the pace was quite as blistering as it sounds. Knight has become supreme in this version of the game and his rapid, improvised half-century was anticipated. Wells matched him in the desire to innovate shots and their fifties both came at more than a run a ball.

Alleyne (60 in 46 balls) and Neil Fairbrother (56 from 49) sustained the momentum at the end, careful not to lose wickets, judicious in scampering singles in the way Fairbrother has probably patented by now and later hitting freely. Queensland lost too many wickets early to have a realistic tilt at making

more than six an over for 50 overs. Law perished to an assured catch by Ashley Giles at third man. England bowled well enough, not least the tidy Robert Croft, and John Crawley was sufficiently assured behind the stumps, but the rest was practice.

**ENGLAND innings**  
N V Knight b Croft 58  
V J Wells run out 63  
S C Hollis c Foley b Bichel 30  
P J Crawley c Seacombe b Bichel 20  
M H Fairbrother not out 56  
A J Hollis c Law b Bichel 17  
M W Alleyne c Law b Croft 60  
M A Ealham not out 60  
Extras (b6 w7 no2) 18  
Total (19.7 overs, 50 overs) 324  
Fall: 1-28 2-50 3-185 4-204 5-215 6-307  
Dad Moe Bat: R O B Croft, A F Giles, A O Mullally

**QUEENSLAND innings**  
M L Hayden b Mullally 24  
J P Miller c Seacombe b Mullally 25  
S G Law c Giles b Alleyne 15  
M L Love c Crawley b A J Hollis 15  
G I Foley c Knight b Giles 21  
M Miller c S C Hollis b Alleyne 20  
S A Prestidge c Fairbrother b Alleyne 21  
W A Seacombe c Wells b Alleyne 16  
B N Croft c Wells b Alleyne 10  
A J Bichel c Giles b Alleyne 10  
M S Kapoor not out 2  
Extras (b6 no1) 9  
Total (42.2 overs) 232  
Fall: 1-39 2-47 3-70 4-79 5-151 6-171 7-189 8-199 9-220  
Bowling: Kapoor 3-0-24-0; Miller 6-0-43-0; Bichel 10-0-57-3; Prestidge 10-0-57-0; Croft 10-0-55-2; Foley 4-0-24-0; Law 7-0-45-0.

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## Fine tales of the riverbank

IT IS closed season for the salmon and trout, so over the past few months I have been enjoying reading about fishing with a Monte Cristo or seven never far from my lips (sadly no real fire but a radiator, viewed through cigar haze and a half light, is an okay substitute).

To those that have never read any fishing books, they seem dreadfully dull. But some of these books are so fine and so soothing they should be prescribed by doctors for those with high blood pressure. One of my favourite books of the moment, and one that I read and re-read, is "Salmon & Women" by Wilma Paterson and Professor Peter Behan (Witherby). Although it examines the theory that women catch bigger salmon (because the bigger ones tend to be cock fish and attracted to the pheromones the female fisher passes down the line), it is the tales of long ago that enchant me. So, such as that of Georgina Ballantine's UK rod and line record (still held to this day) with her 64lb fish, caught in October 1922 on the Tay. And the fabulously named and stylish Miss Lettice Ward, who caught – among other fine fish – a 50lb salmon in 1928 on the Kinraddie beat of the Tay (where I am going next month so shall look her name up in the log book). This book is written in a lovely, lolling style that is a delight to read, with some wonderfully evocative photographs, including one of the Queen Mother fishing in New Zealand in 1927.

On the subject of women, a book to avoid is "The Women's Guide to Angling" by Judith Miller (Thomas Harwood). Any woman who needs a gender-specific guide to



# Henman made to struggle for win

**TENNIS**  
BY DERRICK WHYTE  
in Doha

TOP SEED Tim Henman had to pull out all the stops to top the American Jeff Tarango in the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open in Doha, British No 1 Henman ought to have wrapped up a straight sets win but squandered three match points in the second set to let Tarango off the hook.

Henman went on to beat Tarango in the third set and secure a semi-final spot with a 6-4, 6-7, 6-4 victory that took two hours and 34 minutes.

However, Henman, the world No7, knows he cannot afford to repeat the lack of concentration which enabled Tarango to take the second set tie-break if he is to go on and win the tournament.

"Jeff put up a strong resistance," admitted Henman, who fired 21 aces during the match. Despite his defeat Tarango, ranked 74th in the world, still managed a smile. He said: "I did everything that I could. I think my form has really come on."

After an assured start by Henman in the first set, a real dogfight ensued in the next, with a furious exchange before Tarango squared the match in the marathon tie-break.

But Henman was not to be denied and, falling back on his elegant and elegant play, he asserted himself in the third to earn a semi-final meeting with the winner of the match between Hicham Arazi and Karim Alami.

Henman responded well to the loss of the second set, breaking Tarango in the opening game of the third and opening a 3-0 lead. Tarango clawed his way back to 4-3 down but Henman held his nerve to kill off the American's comeback.

Henman was flying the flag for Britain following the surprise exit of second seed Greg Rusedski, who crashed out against Germany's Bernd Karbacher in the opening round.

Henman had no trouble in disposing of the Dutchman Sjeng Schalken in his first-round match.

However, the erratic form in

evidence against Tarango had surfaced in his second round victory over Morocco's Younes El Anaoui, where he struggled early on and lost the opening set before getting his act together.

Henman has set his heart on winning the title, making up for last year's quarter-final exit against Petr Korda.

Meanwhile, Sweden were set to play Australia in today's Hopman Cup final after Jonas Bjorkman and Asa Carlsson came from behind to defeat Switzerland's Ivo Heuberger and Martina Hingis 2-1.

Hingis won the opening singles tie 6-2, 6-2, before Bjorkman drubbed her partner Heuberger 6-2, 6-0 to level the tie. The Swedes claimed the mixed doubles 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

The relief was evident on the face of Bjorkman, who has been required to win all of his singles games during the mixed teams championship because Carlsson has lost all three of hers.

The final will pit the Swedes against the big-serving Mark Philippoussis, last year's losing US Open finalist, and the 15-year-old prodigy Jelena Dokic.

Bjorkman was delighted at needing less than an hour to dispose of Heuberger, who made an unacceptable 34 unforced errors.

"I never let him into the match, but I do think I had one of my best matches," Bjorkman said. "I'm very happy and pleased that I've won all three singles matches."

The seven-time Wimbledon champion Steffi Graf overpowered the American teenager Serena Williams 6-2, 7-6 to reach the final of the Super-Power Challenge Cup in Hong Kong.

Graf faces Williams' sister Venus, who beat Anna Kournikova of Russia 6-4, 6-3 in the other semi-final.



Jan-Michael Gambill plays a backhand against Karol Kucera in the Hopman Cup yesterday

## Rafter short on motivation

THE REIGNING US Open champion, Pat Rafter, lost to the lowly-ranked Slava Dosedel in an early-season tour event yesterday and confessed that he was struggling to get motivated for the year ahead.

The Australian, ranked No 4 in the world, was swept out of the Adelaide men's hardcourt tournament in the second round, beaten 7-5, 6-4 by the 64th-ranked Czech.

"The last two years have been very difficult, so it has been hard to get motivated and do the

work again," Rafter said after being humbled out of his first tournament back from a two-month lay-off with a knee injury.

Rafter said he had tried to maintain his training during the break but had been losing focus under the weight of his playing commitments and recent fame. "It was really hard to push," he said. "I've got to find that motivation over the next week leading up to the [Australian] Open."

Rafter has his sights on the top ranking this year, and had

his hopes boosted by the withdrawal from the Melbourne grand slam event of current No 1, Pete Sampras.

However, the 26-year-old admitted to feeling the pressure of public life after his back-to-back US Open wins and rise up the rankings. Success has seen him plastered as a sex symbol on magazine covers worldwide and he is continually mobbed by fans.

Rafter said the constant attention was a small price to pay for his success, but was

tough to handle nevertheless. "I'm confined to the hotel a lot because I just don't want to deal with people all the time. People are being nice but at the same time it's hard for me to be nice all the time," he said.

Rafter was sluggish on court against Dosedel yesterday, being frequently passed at the net by the Czech right-hander. The defending champion, Australian Lleyton Hewitt, advanced to the quarter-finals, completing a 7-6, 2-6, 6-4 win over another Czech, Jiri Novak.

## Phillips fit to return for Sunderland

SUNDERLAND'S Premiership promotion campaign should be given a timely boost when their exciting striker Kevin Phillips returns after a long absence through injury to face Queen's Park Rangers.

Phillips, who has been out since September with a toe injury, is under consideration for the trip to Loftus Road, where Sunderland will be seeking only their second victory ever without the services of an array of attackers.

Their manager, Peter Reid, will select his team without being able to call on Daniele Dichio, who is suspended, and the injured Michael Gray, Allan Johnston and Nicky Summerbee.

Although Sunderland are eight points clear at the top of the First Division, they cannot afford to ease up with Ipswich and Birmingham chasing them hard for the automatic promotion places. Second-placed Ipswich will unveil their new wing-back Fabian Wilnis at the home game with Grimsby, while Birmingham are at home to struggling Port Vale. The First Division's manager of the month, Paul Jewell, takes his Bradford side to Stockport.

Watford's assistant manager, Kenny Jackett, is wary that last week's 5-2 FA Cup defeat at Tottenham could work

**NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL**  
BY MARK PIERSON

against the Hornets when Portsmouth, giants in the third round but struggling in the League, visit Vicarage Road.

Oxford United's manager, Malcolm Shotton, is aiming to get his side's feet back on the ground after the thrill of being paired with Chelsea in the FA Cup fourth round for the relegation six-pointer against Bristol City at the Manor Ground.

Norwich City have put their FA Cup defeat by Sheffield Wednesday behind them and their manager, Bruce Rioch, is confident his side can bounce back at the bottom club, Crewe.

Again, West Brom's inconsistency frustrated their fans when they fell 1-0 at Bournemouth in the FA Cup, leaving their manager, Denis Smith, wondering if his side can maintain form to challenge for a play-off place. Smith wants his side to get back on track when Barnsley visit The Hawthorns.

Sheffield United's player-manager, Steve Bruce, has received a boost to his side's play-off chances with the return of David Holdsworth to face Swindon after four months out with knee ligament damage.

## Brannan steps down from Rangers post

BOB BRANNAN yesterday confirmed he was stepping down as Rangers' chief executive and said he did not want to pursue a career in football. Brannan revealed he came to a decision about a month ago that it was time to explore other avenues.

The announcement came just four days before Rangers set off for Florida to set up a winter training camp.

Brannan, who leaves Ibrox after just six months having previously been the manager at a whisky company, gave his reasons in a statement released by the club.

"I have today resigned my position as director and chief executive of Rangers," he said. "I took the decision more than a month ago that I did not want to follow a long-term career in football. In recent weeks I have been pursuing other career op-

portunities and felt it appropriate to make my intentions known to David Murray [the Rangers chairman] given the high-profile nature of my position."

"I would like to thank David for the opportunity he has given me to work in football and regret the timing of my decision. I wish the club every success for this season and beyond. This concludes my statement and I have no intention of commenting further either now or in the future."

Murray will now take charge of day-to-day operations at the Scottish Premier League leaders. "I am disappointed for both parties that it didn't work out. I personally wish Bob well in his future career," Murray said.

"I will assume responsibility for day to day operations at the club. There will be no further statement on this issue."

## Simons sinks teeth in Sharks

RASHOD JOHNSON makes his debut for Greater London Leopards in the National Cup Final tomorrow, the unwitting centrepiece of a controversy that has spiced up preparations for an apparently one-sided contest in which the Sharks are overwhelming favourites for victory on their own court at Sheffield Arena.

Leopards' owner, Ed Simons, ridiculed claims by the Sharks coach, Chris Finch, that Johnson should not have been allowed to register for the final. "Last season Sheffield made exactly the same move when they brought in John Amaechi

**BASKETBALL**  
BY RICHARD TAYLOR

from America," Simons said. "Their sole aim was to use Amaechi to win them a title and that's what he did by winning the League Trophy virtually single-handed."

"At the time Yuri Matischen [Sheffield's general manager] rang me and asked for the Leopards' support. I told him that the League needed players of Amaechi's quality, and good luck to them if he chose to go to Sheffield."

"Now we get this nonsense

from their coach. He should concentrate his aggression for the basketball court."

Finch is also angry that his own Peter Scantlebury is cup-tied and that the Leopards were allowed to postpone tonight's scheduled Trophy game with London Towers, giving them a clear week to prepare for the final.

Sheffield had to play Birmingham Bulls in a televised Budweiser League game last night, and Leopards' coach, Billy Mims, admitted he is grateful for the extra time.

"We've had all week to prepare," he said, "but Sheffield

had to concentrate on Birmingham until 24 hours before the final. That will help us."

Sheffield have twice beaten the Leopards in the League this season by more than 25 points, but Finch warned: "They have no pressure on them, and if they win it makes their season."

The National Basketball Association has suspended a day after stunning the skiing world by announcing that the 20-year-old Austrian improved by 3.8 seconds to win the second, almost half a second ahead of the field. In the process, he bettered a 24-year-old record set by the Swede Ingemar Stenmark.

## Jones' birthday bash

ROY JONES JUNIOR will stage a boxing birthday celebration in his home town of Pensacola tonight - even though it comes a week early.

The man who holds the World Boxing Association and World Boxing Council light heavyweight titles will not be 30 until 16 January and wanted to stage his mandatory defence against Rick Frazier, a 39-year-old New York City police officer, on that date. However, he was blocked from doing it by Mike Tyson's comeback fight against Francois. Both on the same day at Las Vegas.

The left-handed Frazier, a

police officer for 17 years, does not expect to ruin Jones' birthday celebration. He has fought only 22 times in a professional career that began in 1982 and there has been criticism of his No 1 ranking.

Jones, who often fought in Pensacola early in a career that began in 1989, will be appearing in his third championship bout in his hometown. In 1995, he defended the International Boxing Federation super-middleweight title

by stopping Antoine Byrd in the first round and Tony Thornton in the third.

Birmingham's Anthony Maynard has been forced to withdraw from his all-British European lightweight title fight with Billy Scherer in London on 16 January.

The 26-year-old Maynard, the Midlands Area champion, was due to meet defending champion Scherer at the York Hall, Bethnal Green, but he has dislocated his shoulder in training.

Maynard's trainer, Pat Cowdell, said: "There is no way he can fight until the problem is sorted out."

## TODAY'S NUMBER

7  
The arrests so far in a basketball conspiracy and bribery scandal in Arizona. The latest man charged is Vincent Basso, the son of a Chicago mob associate.

### BIATHLON

WORLD CUP (Soviet) Men's 10km sprint: 1 V Drachev (Rus) 27min 44.6sec (two penalty points); 2 O E Blednikov (Rus) 27:48.2 (3); 3 R Gusev (Rus) 28:06.1 (1); 4 P Rozstovets (Rus) 28:08.3 (0); 5 V Sashurin (Bel) 28:35.8 (1); 6 J Linder (Swe) 28:36.9 (0); 7 F Luck (Ger) 28:47.0 (1); 8 W Rozdman (Aust) 28:58.7 (0); 9 V Hietalahti (Fin) 29:01.8 (0); 10 G Gabor (Hun) 29:02.2 (1); 11 A Aidarov (Auz) 29:05.7 (1); 12 T Gloabnick (Slov) 29:09.8 (1); 13 H Hanevold (Nor) 29:09.9 (2); 14 W Pernert (Auz) 29:28.6 (1); 15 V Mochizuki (Jpn) 29:30.4 (1). World Cup sprint (Aust) 14:39.5; 2 S Fischer (Ger) 14:42.3; 3 C E Bormdalen (Nor) 14:46.4; 4 F Luck (Ger) 14:51.3; 5 R Polke (Fin) 15:01.4; 6 A Bormdalen (Nor) 15:01.4; 7 V Sashurin (Bel) 15:01.4; 8 R Cernavouski (Rus) 15:01.4; 9 S Gusev (Rus) 15:01.4; 10 Z Zubrilov (Rus) 15:01.4; 11 S Natanov (Rus) 15:01.4; 12 S Gusev (Rus) 15:01.4; 13 S Natanov (Rus) 15:01.4; 14 W Pernert (Auz) 15:01.4; 15 V Mochizuki (Jpn) 15:01.4.

### GOLF

MERCEDES CHAMPIONSHIP (Kauai, Hawaii) Leading three-round scores (US unless stated): 55 S Pace, F Rank, J Durant, A Mayr, B Andrade, O Duval, G J Furey, J Cook, J Leonard, C C. 56 C. 57 W. 58 L. 59 P. 60 J. 61 P. 62 S. 63 J. 64 C. 65 J. 66 S. 67 W. 68 C. 69 J. 70 B. 71 J. 72 M. 73 M. 74 M. 75 M. 76 M. 77 M. 78 M. 79 M. 80 M. 81 M. 82 M. 83 M. 84 M. 85 M. 86 M. 87 M. 88 M. 89 M. 90 M. 91 M. 92 M. 93 M. 94 M. 95 M. 96 M. 97 M. 98 M. 99 M. 100 M. 101 M. 102 M. 103 M. 104 M. 105 M. 106 M. 107 M. 108 M. 109 M. 110 M. 111 M. 112 M. 113 M. 114 M. 115 M. 116 M. 117 M. 118 M. 119 M. 120 M. 121 M. 122 M. 123 M. 124 M. 125 M. 126 M. 127 M. 128 M. 129 M. 130 M. 131 M. 132 M. 133 M. 134 M. 135 M. 136 M. 137 M. 138 M. 139 M. 140 M. 141 M. 142 M. 143 M. 144 M. 145 M. 146 M. 147 M. 148 M. 149 M. 150 M. 151 M. 152 M. 153 M. 154 M. 155 M. 156 M. 157 M. 158 M. 159 M. 160 M. 161 M. 162 M. 163 M. 164 M. 165 M. 166 M. 167 M. 168 M. 169 M. 170 M. 171 M. 172 M. 173 M. 174 M. 175 M. 176 M. 177 M. 178 M. 179 M. 180 M. 181 M. 182 M. 183 M. 184 M. 185 M. 186 M. 187 M. 188 M. 189 M. 190 M. 191 M. 192 M. 193 M. 194 M. 195 M. 196 M. 197 M. 198 M. 199 M. 200 M. 201 M. 202 M. 203 M. 204 M. 205 M. 206 M. 207 M. 208 M. 209 M. 210 M. 211 M. 212 M. 213 M. 214 M. 215 M. 216 M. 217 M. 218 M. 219 M. 220 M. 221 M. 222 M. 223 M. 224 M. 225 M. 226 M. 227 M. 228 M. 229 M. 230 M. 231 M. 232 M. 233 M. 234 M. 235 M. 236 M. 237 M. 238 M. 239 M. 240 M. 241 M. 242 M. 243 M. 244 M. 245 M. 246 M. 247 M. 248 M. 249 M. 250 M. 251 M. 252 M. 253 M. 254 M. 255 M. 256 M. 257 M. 258 M. 259 M. 260 M. 261 M. 262 M. 263 M. 264 M. 265 M. 266 M. 267 M. 268 M. 269 M. 270 M. 271 M. 272 M. 273 M. 274 M. 275 M. 276 M. 277 M. 278 M. 279 M. 280 M. 281 M. 282 M. 283 M. 284 M. 285 M. 286 M. 287 M. 288 M. 289 M. 290 M. 291 M. 292 M. 293 M. 294 M. 295 M. 296 M. 297 M. 298 M. 299 M. 300 M. 301 M. 302 M. 303 M. 304 M. 305 M. 306 M. 307 M. 308 M. 309 M. 310 M. 311 M. 312 M. 313 M. 314 M. 315 M. 316 M. 317 M. 318 M. 319 M. 320 M. 321 M. 322 M. 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**BY CLIVE WHITE AND NICK HARRIS**

## AS YOU WERE

what he should be doing," says Clare Balding as she watches up at Ascot with Peter O'Sullivan. Pace starts slowly, a little solemn, but confident, building it up nicely, spotting a couple of fallers, and calling the end of the race perfectly. "Very impressive," says Dave Gordon. "I drove away from Newbury thinking they'd never ever do it. But they've surprised me."

As Hale hands the reins to the rider — "That's the first professional hand-off over about three years," Rider says — there is general amazement and jubilation in the Grandstand control room, while Pace is, in fact, no doubt already suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. "I'm never doing that again," says Hale.

The final frame is left to Pace, looking like a lunch — "Scream" when Bartlett tells him he can do the next race as well. They have got away with it. Now why don't they do it all a favour and switch jobs altogether?







# 30/FOOTBALL

## Pride is at stake for the Newcastle manager as former protege brings title-chasing Chelsea to St James' Park Past about to catch up with Gullit

BY GLENN MOORE

IN KEVIN KEEGAN'S heyday as the manager of Newcastle United the players trained in front of adoring crowds so large that a mobile hot-dog van was in daily and profitable attendance. Yesterday, as Rudi Gullit put the current squad through their paces, there were just 18 supporters in attendance.

As a snapshot of the club's decline it was an eloquent picture but also a false one. Given that United have won two of their last 11 League games, and that it was pouring with rain on Tyneside yesterday, it was amazing that anyone came to watch at all. That one lad did so wearing little but a white shirt and black trousers begged belief. But then, as with so much to do with the put-upon Magpies these days, not everything in black-and-white makes sense.

The chaos in the boardroom is well documented. Already this season they have sacked Kenny Dalglish two games into a £15m investment, then invited back Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall, the shamed directors, provoking the angry resignation of Denis Cassidy, the club chairman.

In the dressing-room there is uncertainty. To the players, according to Warren Barton, "The first thing Rudi told us was there was nothing wrong

*'I put Chelsea's team together. It is my vision, my ideas they are still practising. I am proud of that'*

with the team. What was missing was confidence." To the press he said: "I have inherited a relegation team."

Yesterday he continued his "mission" to change that, introducing his third new signing to training, Louis Saha, on loan from the French side Metz. Gullit, who took over at the end of August, also admitted an interest in Crystal Palace's well-regarded young forward Matt Jansen and said it could take "a year" to get the team he wants. Five players have left and several more will follow, with the disaffected Alessandro Pistone and Dietmar Hamann likely to lead the exodus.

In the stands there is similar confusion. A crowd which has become, at times, tetchy and mutinous, reacted to last week's early deficit in the FA Cup tie with Crystal Palace by roaring the team to victory. And on the horizon is the potential takeover of the club by NTL, a Hampshire-based media company involved in cable television.

Today, Gullit's new team face his old one, Chelsea, at St James' Park. Chelsea, who sacked Gullit in acrimonious circumstances in February, are second in the Premiership, Newcastle are 13th. Though



Rudi Gullit, the Newcastle manager (right), limbers up before taking his squad of players for a training session at the Riverside Complex in Chester-le-Street yesterday

Peter Jay

Gullit spoke carefully of looking forward not back, he made it clear he felt it was his team chasing the title, not Gianluca Vialli's. It had been "easy" for his successor, he said, as "my" players, tactics and rotation system were all in place.

"He has done exactly what I was trying to do, he tried to play 4-3-3 and lost all his games and went back to my system," Gullit added. "I also see he said rotation was a good idea. It is my vision, my ideas, they are still practising them. I put [Chelsea's] team together, I am proud of that and the success they've had. Now they have to go for the title, that was my goal, anything else would be a loss."

Gullit's words are unlikely to soothe the atmosphere in the boardroom and dug-outs today but they do highlight the core difficulty in assessing the two clubs. Is Chelsea's success a compliment to Gullit's team-

building or due to Vialli's own tactical nous and management skills? Similarly, are Newcastle's struggles down to Dalglish or Gullit - who inherited a squad containing 16 internationals?

At Chelsea, Vialli, crucially, has introduced Marcel Desailly and Albert Ferrer. He has also kept a largely settled defence. The team has subsequently become much harder to beat. Would this have happened under Gullit? At Newcastle the jury is still out on the Dutchman but there is an undercurrent of optimism.

Mark Jensen, editor of *The Mag*, a long-established club fanzine, believes the club is progressing. "I feel bringing Gullit in was a huge step forward," he said. "The players he brought in at Chelsea are the framework of their current team and I feel he'll do the same here; the board appears to have learned the lesson

from the Dalglish reign that you have to buy quality. I hope once the takeover is sorted out, and I suspect that it will go through, things will improve. It takes time - people have got to be realistic."

At times like this it is worth reflecting on how far the club has come. Without a championship since 1927, or a trophy since 1969, they were floundering in the old Second Division when Sir John Hall and his son, Douglas, persuaded Keegan to come back in early 1992. Had Newcastle not won their last two matches that season they would have been relegated instead of Plymouth Argyle. They were promoted to the Premiership the following season and, in the five years since, have finished third, sixth, second, second and 13th, the latter being combined with a first FA Cup final appearance since 1974.

That is the rosy view. The other notes that Keegan, after

spending £60m, blew the title in 1995-96 while last year's League performances were dull and the Cup final display abject.

Even so, to take the decision to sack Dalglish so soon after giving him £15m to spend was rank mismanagement and his replacement by Gullit has yet to be justified. Gullit's big advantage, he freely admitted yesterday, is in the transfer market. "Players want to play for me because of the success I have had," he said. "So far everyone I have approached wants to play for me."

But signing personality managers, then giving them carte blanche in the transfer market, is an expensive way to run a club and Newcastle desperately need him to be successful. With Middlesbrough and Sunderland booming they are in danger of becoming the region's third club.

Plans are underway to avoid this dreaded prospect. Though

the takeover has worrying implications for the game in general - as with Manchester United and Sky - it ought to lead to an injection of cash for Gullit. This will ease the short-term burden created by the club's bold response to the block on building a new stadium on Town Moor - they have embarked on re-building St James' Park to lift capacity to 51,000.

However, Sir John Hall's original concept of a Newcastle Sporting Club representing "the Geordie nation" on the lines of Barcelona and Catalonia, has effectively been abandoned. The Newcastle Falcons rugby union club, Eagles basketball club, and Riverkings ice hockey club continue but are increasingly divorced from the football organisation.

Other expansion plans have also had mixed success, with both the academy for young players and the state-of-the-art training complex awaiting plan-

ning permission. The youngsters should be able to move in soon but the first team's new home is not much beyond the architect's drawing board. Meanwhile, they use borrowed facilities adjacent to Durham County Cricket Club's impressive Chester-le-Street headquarters.

As a consequence, Gullit's press conference - which yesterday attracted four television crews and various radio and written media - is held in the foyer of the local council's leisure complex, which shares the site. Thus, while Louis van Gaal holds court at the Nou Camp under photographs of great Barcelona triumphs, and a picture gallery featuring every one of the club's many Spanish internationals, Gullit faces the media under signs directing visitors to the kitchen and the public toilets.

None of this helps. When teams are struggling these are

the things players and coaches complain about. Similarly fans are quicker to object to the likes of Hall and Shepherd if the team are losing.

"Everything relates to what happens on the pitch," added Mark Jensen. "At Manchester United the off-field developments like the takeover are just a diversion because the team are still in the Champions' League. People respond to success."

How far away is this for Newcastle? Gullit, preparing the public for the worst, said yesterday: "I hope, in a year, this will be my team. I have just begun here, it is a big job. Chelsea are much further advanced than we are. They have been a long time together and have had success already. I do not have to prove anything in this match."

All the same, both he and Vialli would very much like to win it, and not just for the sake of three points.

## Fowler's Highbury stadium tour Wenger unimpressed by warning from FA

BY GUY HODGSON

YOU CAN say what you like about the fixture computer, there is clearly a chip in there marked "mischievous sense of humour". Most weeks it throws up at least one game with undertones but today it has surpassed itself. The bytes are grinning like a toothpaste advertisement.

Just a normal day? Think again. Robbie Fowler going to Arsenal is enough to keep one's wry muscles in focus but in addition Martin O'Neill is going to a club he turned down. David Platt revisits Hillsborough and Ron Atkinson's past and possible future will meet at Highbury Road. Oh, and there is the matter of Rudi Gullit playing host to Chelsea.

That is enough coincidences to make a detective novel totally implausible, but anything that can accommodate bizarre concepts such as the Nottingham Forest board, holidays for over-worked (sic) goalkeepers, £35,000-a-week wages and someone called the Football Association compliance officer is unlikely to have much grasp on reality.

Certainly there is a sense of the surreal about Fowler's position today. All week he has been denying reports linking him to Arsenal, so where does he get the chance to check out the facilities? That's right: Highbury. Someone is trying to tell him something.

The emphasis was always going to be on strikers (and before Arsène Wenger's briefs get twitchy we are talking scorers not punchers), because Arsenal have fewer goals than any other team in the top 10 and it is no secret they are searching for someone. Cue Fowler who, happily enough, has just bought a property in north London.

To add a twist to the tale, Fowler is not guaranteed a place in Liverpool's starting line-up today, which goes to show what substitutes can cost these days. And it can be assumed a place on the bench is unlikely to help the contract talks at Anfield.

Arsenal, meanwhile, wel-

come Nicolas Anelka, who must wonder what the fuss is about, considering he has scored 12 League goals with the absent Dennis Bergkamp. Whichever strike force prevails it will suit a run, because both sides have three consecutive League victories. Liverpool, it should be remembered, were the only team to complete the double over the Double-winners last season.

While that will add spice at Highbury, the passions will need nothing at St James' Park where Newcastle versus Chelsea represents Gullit's first meeting with the club that sacked him 11 months ago.

At the time Chelsea's chairman, Ken Bates, showed typical diplomacy by saying: "We

are not prepared to pay a huge slice of our budget for a part-time playboy." It is probably safe to say that while his supporters cherish wins over Sunderland, Gullit would prefer to crush second-placed Chelsea.

The Londoners could go top, although it would involve their winning at Newcastle and Aston Villa drawing, or worse, at Middlesbrough. A few weeks ago the latter would have seemed likely but since Borro lost their 14-month unbeaten home record to Liverpool they have had three consecutive defeats.

At Goodison, Everton supporters can watch a side managed by O'Neill with the uneasy feeling that it might have been their own. He was the first choice as replacement for

Howard Kendall in the summer but when he preferred to stay at Leicester, Walter Smith was appointed. While no one can knock the sense he brought with him from Glasgow some might like a few frills too. In the home of the 0-0 draw, it goes without saying today's game will be tight.

Which is not how you could describe Tottenham, who arrive at Hillsborough fresh from a 5-3 FA Cup win over Watford, which you would think would be an anathema for George Graham. Add four goals in the previous game to David Ginola's resurgence and White Hart Lane is undergoing a culture-shock, as Scrooge undergoes his transformation into Happy Larry.

Platt, Tottenham's director of football, will also be entitled to a small smile himself when he goes back to the club that sacked him last season. After all, he had bought and primed a time-bomb called Paulo Di Canio before he left.

Elsewhere, Southampton versus Charlton will not clarify the relegation issues, managerless Forest will travel to fellow strugglers Coventry and Brian Kidd's unbeaten run as Blackburn manager will face its stiffest test against Leeds.

Kidd, of course, spent many years avoiding being No 1, so who was named manager of the month yesterday? Not only the fixture computer has a sense of paradox.

ARSENÉ WENGER, the Arsenal manager, insists he will retain his right to freedom of speech despite the warning he has received from the Football Association's "disciplinary" officer after he called Neil Redfearn, the Charlton midfielder, a cheat.

Wenger's remarks, which came after Patrick Vieira was sent off for an elbowing retaliation that left Redfearn on the floor clutching his face during a Premiership clash 12 days ago, infuriated the Charlton manager, Alan Curbishley, and started a war of words which is still rumbling on.

Graham Bean, the former police officer who recently started work as the FA liaison officer, contacted Wenger on Thursday with a clear indication that such comments run the risk of provoking a disreputable charge. However, Wenger responded: "I don't know how he'll stop me saying what I believe - unless he puts me in jail."

Wenger, after watching a video of the Vieira sending-off incident, was adamant that Redfearn made the Arsenal player's offence look much worse than it was by going down with his hands held to his face, even though any contact was clearly made with his shoulder. Wenger said: "I was

BY TOMMY STANFORTH

asked my opinion about it and I said I believed Redfearn was a cheat on that occasion. If you ask me 50 more times I will say the same. I don't know why I should change it. But I have the greatest respect for Alan Curbishley and Charlton and do not feel I have attacked them."

Curbishley defended Redfearn following Wenger's comments but the Arsenal manager then pointed to statistics showing the Charlton player had committed more fouls than anybody else in the Premiership this season.

Manchester United are running the risk of losing Denis Irwin for nothing because of a delay in contract talks. United's Irish defender is free to leave Old Trafford at the end of the season and has been waiting for contract talks to start for months. Another year at Old Trafford would entitle him to a testimonial. Blackburn Rovers, Leeds and Manchester City could all be interested if he becomes available.

Carl Cort, the Wimbledon striker, has asked referee Graham Poll to rescind the red card he received for fighting in the Dons' third round FA Cup victory over Manchester City.

"Anyone who sees the incident will know that there's nothing in it," Cort said.

Paolo Di Canio is expected to make his peace with Sheffield Wednesday and return to Hillsborough at the end of the month, his agent said yesterday. The Italian striker has already served an 11-match ban for pushing over referee Paul Alcock during a game against Arsenal last September. He has also been fined two weeks' wages for not returning to Wednesday after his suspension ended in December.

Ian Stott, the Oldham chairman, wants to become the new chairman of the Football Association. Stott is already a member of the FA's influential management committee and feels he is ideally suited to succeed Keith Wiseman, who was forced out over the "cash-for-votes" scandal.

Ultra-right Atletico Madrid supporters smashed windows and painted slogans on the door of the Spanish Football Federation headquarters in protest at the jailing of Jesus Gil, the club's president. Gil, who is also mayor of Marbella, was sent to jail without bail on Thursday, accused of illegally funneling town hall funds to Atletico.







## SPORT

GULLIT OLD BOYS' REUNION P30 • HENMAN TOPPLES TARANGO P27

Warne tells  
of cash gift  
at casino

IT READS like a John Le Carré novel and, if the master storyteller were to use the hearing which began in Melbourne yesterday as the basis for his latest best-seller, he might well title it "Batsman, bowler, bookmaker, spy?"

The role of Le Carré's hero, George Smiley, has fallen to the Pakistan Cricket Board Counsel, Ali Sibtain Fazli, who yesterday resumed his difficult role of unveiling the truth behind murky allegations of bribery and corruption in international cricket. Fazli has travelled thousands of miles to interview the Australian cricketers Mark Waugh and Shane Warne about their being offered \$200,000 (£120,000) each by the Pakistan captain, Salim Malik, to throw matches. He is also questioning them about their decision to accept thousands of dollars from a bookmaker they met in Sri Lanka in September 1994, to whom they supplied pitch and weather reports.

Yesterday the plot thickened. According to the two men, the dealings began in a casino in Colombo in 1994. Waugh said he was offered, and accepted, \$3,000 after losing money at the tables in the Sri Lankan capital, believing there were "no strings attached".

Warne told the Pakistani government inquiry into match-fixing and bookmaking that he had

CRICKET  
BY NICK RIPPINGTON

been introduced to a man called "John" by his team-mate Mark Waugh, the prolific middle-order batsman. "John" had approached Waugh the next day and told him he had noticed that he had lost money at the casino and added that he was his favourite player.

Warne told the inquiry that "John" had given him an envelope containing the money, which he had at first rejected. "He handed me an envelope. I looked in the envelope and saw that there was money in it," Waugh said. "He said: 'Please accept it as a token of my appreciation for you to take the time to meet me.'" Waugh said he told the bookmaker: "I've got my own money, I'm fine, thanks."

"He said: 'It's a pleasure to meet you, please take it. I don't want anything in return.'" Waugh said he again tried to reject the money but finally accepted it when the bookmaker said he had plenty of money and would be offended if Waugh refused the envelope. The bowler said he had never seen the man again, although he had been contacted by him several times with requests for information on weather and pitch conditions before matches in Australia. "However I never gave any

information that was not generally available to the public and indeed, as a senior Australian cricketer, I regularly provide a lot more detailed information about playing conditions to the media," Waugh said. "I appreciate now that I made a mistake. At the time I was 24. I was naive and stupid. I regret my actions."

Waugh told the inquiry that he was also paid to supply weather and pitch information about 10 times to the same Indian bookmaker. "He offered \$4,000 for providing such information," Waugh said. "I told him that I was prepared to talk to him about pitch and weather conditions, but not individuals, team tactics, or team selection."

Waugh said he had no knowledge of a match between Australia and Pakistan in Sri Lanka during the 1994 Singer Cup tournament being rigged. He also denied knowing anything about match-fixing allegations involving Essex and Lancashire in 1991 when Malik played for the south East county. Waugh said he was not with Essex at the time.

The inquiry was continuing today with evidence from Tim May, another player who accused Malik of trying to bribe him, and the then Australian team manager Alan Crompton.

There are sure to be more twists and turns before the final chapter begins.

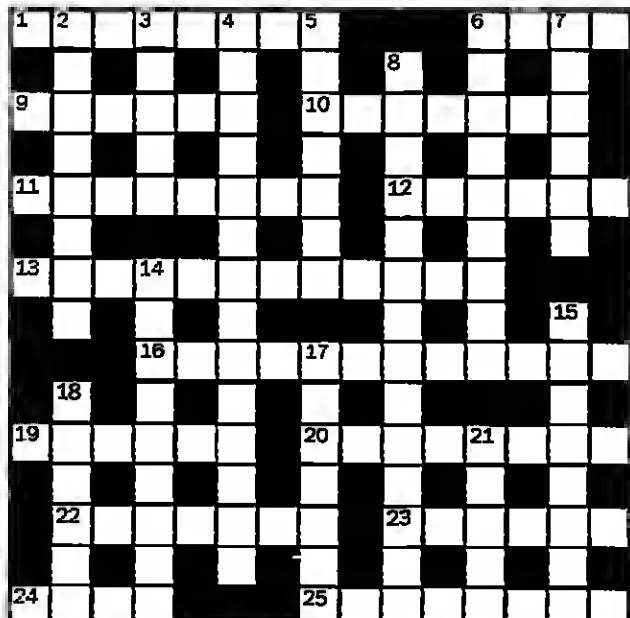


Queensland's Jimmy Maher avoids a run-out by John Crawley during England's 92-run win in Brisbane yesterday. Report, page 26; Photograph: Empics

## THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

No.3815 Saturday 9 January

by Phi



Friday's solution

ONCE OVER NACKIE  
ATOLL ATYPICAL  
FORTUNE HUNTERS  
SYLVAN AGENCIES  
L R A M  
OOITY OURSELPER  
ON N S N  
EMIGRATE AMATI  
TIO P S R S E  
SMITHS CRYSTALS  
O F E O T I E

Last Saturday's solution

WEIGHTLESS  
A S H N Y U E  
TAPODANCED COPE  
M A L H H I F  
FOUSTED GOLDBUST  
S M B G K H  
PASTOR WENHOUSE  
N A F N E  
EQUATION URBANE  
R P E U P  
ENSOURCE MANTRA  
I C E K F H R  
MALC FLINTLOCK  
G U E E H S  
PEARLDIVER

## ACROSS

- 1 Gather a Sunday School curtailed Mark (8)
- 6 Nothing delivered to bar in Scottish town (4)
- 9 Attack Custody Bill (6)
- 10 Aviation pioneer almost created movement in the air - a great success (7)
- 11 Traveller's guide - edition (English) carried by tradesmen (8)
- 12 French city with man entering outlying parts (6)
- 13 Stews off sale price? (7,5)
- 16 No longer depressed, unexpectedly? (4,2,3,4)
- 19 Reprieve? Agree charge should be held back (8)
- 20 Disrupted another's supply of water (5,3)
- 22 Dictionary contains word for "beer" in local parlance (7)
- 23 A copper gets blokes with astuteness (6)
- 24 Dress up in some suits (4)
- 25 Caught French friend only in an item of lingerie (8)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hand-drawn copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last two weeks' winners: M. Wilson, Beeston; G. Blandy, Oteschunt; G. Lunt, Lichfield; B. Ward, Radcliffe-on-Trent; D. Kelly, West Malling; M. Klucowicz, N18; T. Starn, Cambridge; A. Buchanan, Burnley; R. Castell, Newton Abbot; P. Jackson, W1.

## DOWN

- 2 School days over, imbibing quiet drink (8)
- 3 Monarch, blushing, made a slip (5)
- 4 Meal arranged for those retiring early? (9,2,3)
- 5 Restriction thus restricts business qualification (7)
- 6 A lovebird possibly showing a green colour (5,4)
- 7 Complaint as the man ignores a couple of points (6)
- 8 Noble Prince, and therefore male in orientation (4,2,3,5)
- 14 Cold, thundering repository - of rain, presumably (5,4)
- 15 Capital of France - one there's extremely gloomy (8)
- 17 Supporter - it's one caught up in activity of AFC (7)
- 18 Support and advice comes from this man of course (6)
- 21 Drags painter round University (5)

Uttley shown door as  
RFU sheds 30 jobs

## RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

ROGER UTTLEY and Don Rutherford, two of the most influential figures in post-war English rugby, were among the big-name fall guys yesterday as Francis Baron, the new chief executive of the Rugby Football Union, ripped through Twickenham like a supercharged Jonah Lomu. Uttley, the England team manager, and Rutherford, the national director of rugby, saw their jobs disappear as Baron completed his first cost-cutting assault on the bagged and blazered ranks of RFU officialdom.

Thirty of the union's 191 staff were either made redundant or railroaded into early retirement as Baron brought his hard-nosed business approach to bear on what he decided was a flabby administrative structure. Richard Field and Ken Whitehead, respectively director of marketing and director of support services, were also given the heave-ho, while David Fison, the financial director, announced he would leave later this year.

Baron's swinging cuts were

introduced as English rugby politics took another bizarre turn with the news that Bristol, the Allied Dunbar Premiership Two leaders, were planning a takeover bid for London Scottish, the Premiership One team whose finances are nowhere near as healthy as their form.

Bristol are deeply concerned that any new cross-border championship coming into effect next season would leave them outside the top flight, irrespective of whether they qualify for promotion under the terms of the now discredited Mayfair Agreement hammered out by the RFU and the leading professional clubs last spring. They see a buy-out of London Scottish as one way, albeit a radical one, of guaranteeing themselves a place at the big boys' table.

Nick de Scossa, the Bristol chief executive, said negotiations were at an advanced stage.

"It's something we are being forced to consider because of opinions that are being expressed behind the scenes in the negotiations for next season," he said. "We began this season knowing that, under the terms of the Mayfair Agreement, we would go up as a matter of course if we won promotion. As things currently stand, that will not happen. It is not something we intend to allow."

Back at Twickenham, Baron pointed to a series of debilitating multi-million pound losses as justification for his cuts. "The RFU lost £10.3m in the last two years and our projected loss this year has increased from the £1.4m budgeted to a likely deficit of £2.5m," he said. "There has been a management vacuum here and everyone is going to suffer a degree of pain."

Uttley said last night: "This is a huge disappointment. Having gone through the mill to sort things out at England level, recent results showed we were beginning to get it right."

Ulster's challenge, page 23

Oldham,  
Bury and  
Rochdale  
may unite

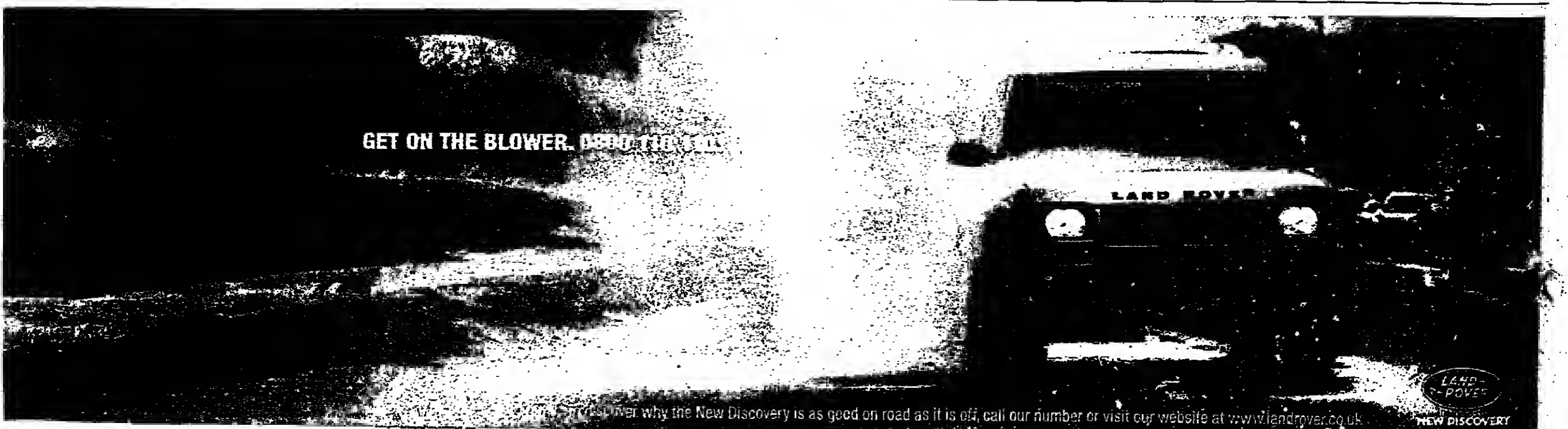
## FOOTBALL

OLDHAM ATHLETIC, Bury and Rochdale are holding merger talks about becoming one club, which may be called Manchester North End.

The radical move to pool resources, cut staff and play at a new ground was confirmed by the Oldham chairman, Ian Stott, on Thursday. All three clubs are struggling financially and Stott revealed that they are considering the plan as the only way forward.

"I have already discussed the possibility with my counterparts at Bury and Rochdale and they see the long-term benefits of such a venture," he said. "There would be horrendous problems, fans from all three clubs who would be opposed to the idea. But it is a question of survival."

The new club would be based at a new stadium near Oldham. Under current Nationwide League rules on mergers, the club would have to commence its existence in the Third Division. Nationwide preview, page 27





# WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • ARTS & BOOKS • COUNTRY & GARDEN • TRAVEL

**THE PLIGHT OF THE AGEING ROCK STAR**

FEATURES, PAGE 9

**BITING BACK AT THE WOLF PACK**

BOOKS, PAGE 15

**HOW MUCH IS YOUR GARDEN COSTING YOU?**

GARDENING, PAGE 17

**FAR FROM THE MADDENING CROWDS**

SKIING, PAGE 25



A quiet, law-abiding couple: Jeff and Jenny Bramley with their foster children, Jade Bennett, 5, and her half-sister Hannah, 3



Dobson's

## Love on the run

The Bramleys, with limited funds, have escaped police detection for four months. It might seem astonishing – except when you consider who would turn in a childless couple desperate to keep the foster children they love

**S**ergeant Mark Nicholson points to two Fiat all-tyres, so new that the thin rubber bridges between the treads are still intact and the treads themselves are clean. It is still a mystery to police why Jenny and Jeff Bramley, on the run for four months with their foster children – Jade Bennett, 5, and her half-sister Hannah, 3 – bought the expensive tyres for the family's blue, G-registration Honda Concerto, only to abandon the car in a residential street in York at least six weeks ago.

But the Honda, which was recovered last week and is now sitting in a lock-up at St Ives police station, near Cambridge, provides the first real trace of the couple who disappeared from their home in nearby Ramsey the day before they were to hand back to Cambridgeshire social services the children they adored, and had fostered for six months with a view to adoption.

Inside St Ives police station, in an investigation room plastered with already-fading newspaper cuttings about the Bramleys' flight, two large plastic bags of clothes and belongings, left in the car boot, present more puzzles.

There is Hannah's pink anorak with fluffy, white-fake-fur-trimmed hood, and a similar winter jacket, in maroon, belonging to Jade. Jeff, 34, and Jenny, 35, also left jackets behind. So slight and small is Jenny that hers was bought in the teenage section of a department store.

Why did they leave behind the clothes – along with children's car seats, an empty handbag and a stack of plastic-wrapped tea bags – when these did not figure in any description issued by the police? Officers were unable to establish what clothes the family had with them.

The car is the police's biggest – in fact, only – breakthrough. Remarkably, it sat in the same York street for five weeks before residents reported it to police, despite all the "tug-of-love" publicity and a description of the car – still bearing its publicised registration number – having been issued by police.

The Honda's discovery, and a "good" subsequent sighting of the family by a retired clergyman on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway last weekend, means hope for a police team hitherto bereft of leads. Seven St Ives officers have

scurried north, but excitement is mixed with trepidation. There have already been sightings, from Ireland to Lanzarote. This one, like the others, could amount to nothing. For the Bramleys, a quiet, law-abiding couple described by relatives as "Mr and Mrs Average", have proved to be formidable fugitives, as elusive to the police as quicksilver. "I expected we would find them in a matter of days," admits Mr Nicholson ruefully. "In this day and age, in this country, it is amazing they have managed for so long."

Just how the Bramleys are managing is the major puzzle. Though the couple are described as frugal, the £5,000 in cash they took with them must now be close to running out. However, they have yet to draw on further funds.

The police have suggested before that the Bramleys have not been caught because they are "so ordinary", easily camouflaged among the hordes of other thirtysomethings trailing round with small children. But the police are considering two other possibilities: that someone is ac-

We may ask why children who were considered to have such special needs were placed with novice parents. The social services spokesman will only say it is "not a perfect science". But the Reverend Jack Cooper, the retired cleric who apparently spotted the family on the Yorkshire steam train, adds to a picture of parental inadequacy. He described the children as out of control, and said that the Bramleys – and particularly Jenny – looked depressed, worn-out and beaten.

The public seems to prefer descriptions from the Bramleys' neighbours, of happy, well-cared-for children.

It is four years since the naked body of little Rikki Neave, who was on Cambridgeshire's at risk register, was found in a Peterborough wood. After his mother was jailed for child cruelty, the council admitted that it had tried too hard to keep Rikki within his birth family. Another scandal occurred two years ago when the "career paedophile" Keith Laverack, a former

was always the strong possibility that they had fled the country. The other appalling option was that the couple and the children were dead.

For Ramsey has a reputation for losing people. Last century the ancient Fenland settlement was a thriving port. Left high and dry by time, it now sits at the edge of hundreds of miles of deep, water-filled drains, which prevent the fens being reclaimed by the sea. If a car leaves the road, by accident or design, it can be months before the vehicle and its occupants are recovered.

Dave and Jenny were born and grew up in Bury village, now an extension of Ramsey, where their father was sub-postmaster for 40 years. The small extended family is close and private. So it was easy to contemplate the worst when Jenny, who "has never been out of contact for more than a week" disappeared without a trace.

Mr Bodle refuses to discuss social services' decision to remove the children, saying that criticism will have to come from Jeff and Jenny themselves. But he says that the couple, who had been married for 10 years, loved the Bennett sisters and were "devastated" when told that they could not keep them.

Mr Bodle, who has worked with people with special needs, says that while the children were "boisterous", they were not hyperactive or badly behaved.

"Jenny and Jeff are so quiet," he says. "So it was quite a contrast between them and the kids, but as a family group it seemed to work. The neighbours seemed to think so, as well."

He describes Jenny as bright but shy, like the husband she met when they both worked at the post office. Both, he claims, are logical and rational people. "You just would never have imagined they would do something as dramatic as this," he says. "But they found themselves in extraordinary circumstances."

He sympathises with the stress the couple have been under while trying to adopt the children. An attempt to challenge the council's decision in court failed; social services remained "judge and jury". "A friend of mine has been through this," says Mr Bodle, "and he says being under constant scrutiny from social services for six months was the worst time of his life."

Continued on page 2

BY MARY BRAID

tively helping them, and that a public, blinded by sympathy for a childless couple who must return the little girls they thought of as their own, is proving to be less vigilant than usual.

Social services deny ever saying that the Bramleys were "too strict", and totally dismiss rumours that they were considered too religious. There is also absolutely no suggestion of any kind of abuse. Quite simply, a spokesman says, it was concluded "after working with the couple for six months" that they lacked the special parenting skills Jade and Hannah needed. The decision, the spokesman insists, was not taken lightly. The authority claims that this is the first time in 10 years that it has terminated such a placement.

That the children had already suffered far too much in their short lives is indisputable. It is just over a year since their mother – apparently unable to cope – handed them over to social services for adoption. They had already been with one foster family before they were placed with the Bramleys, who had never fostered before. When the Bramleys gave them up, another set of foster parents was poised to replace them.

Cambridgeshire senior social services manager, was sentenced to 18 years for assaulting children in care. Those sympathetic to the Bramleys just assume that "the bloody social workers have got it wrong again".

The prevalent public feeling seems to be that the couple's flight is an act of love, not selfishness. But Mr Nicholson appeals to people – and particularly anyone harbouring the Bramleys – to put the children first.

"The focus of the story has become Jeff and Jenny," he says. "And, yes, it is a sad story. But think of the children: their upbringing has been put on hold." Jade was due to start school in September. Her uniform is still hanging, unused, in the abandoned house in Ramsey.

At his home near Colchester, Dave Bodle, Jenny's brother, a civil servant, says that the discovery of the Honda brought the couple's worried family some brief relief.

Like the police, the family had considered two explanations for the failure to trace Jeff and Jenny. With Felixstowe, Harwich and a handful of other ports within easy reach of Ramsey, there

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SEVEN PAGES OF TRAVEL

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TOMORROW IN  
THE INDEPENDENT  
ON SUNDAY

## REVIEW



**Picasso as you've never  
seen him before:  
new pictures from his  
photo album**



**Jeremy Clarke takes  
his dog, Tonto, to  
find a French boar**

## CULTURE



**Asterix: can he save the  
French film industry?**

## REAL LIFE



**What to wear when you  
have a cold or the flu**

**PLUS  
How to manage your  
New Year debt**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk (e-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address). Letters may be edited for length and clarity

## Workers on call

Sir: Congratulations on the excellent article on call centres (Magazine, 2 January). It graphically illustrated the exploitation of workers in our "flexible" job market. The use of agency staff makes it possible for employers to avoid their moral obligation to attend to the welfare of their workers in terms of job security, employment rights and pay.

It is clear that telemarketing is a permanent feature of the way many businesses operate and people who work in these centres should be given permanent jobs with all the benefits that full-time staff are entitled to. The abuse of agency staff where the vast majority of employees are agency workers needs to be addressed in any "fairness at work" legislation.

Your article implied that agency staff are not entitled to join a union. That is not so. The Communications Workers Union (CWU) has a recognition agreement with Manpower plc and employees of other agencies are welcome to join. CLIVE WALDER  
Birmingham

Sir: Is Peter Stanford who wrote your report the same Peter Stanford who spent the day in BT's call centre in Newcastle?

Certainly, the Peter whom we saw confessed to a feeling of overall unease about what he saw as the grubby business of trade and commerce but then was honest enough to say how difficult he found it to reconcile that preconception with the bright, bubbly, enthusiastic and, yes, disciplined people he came across at every level throughout the centre.

No doubt it is easier to recycle individual tales of woe from pseudonymous former telesales workers and previously published material but it stands reality on its head to suggest that our team at Newcastle is "working in a dehumanised environment for low pay". For the record, advisers' average pay is around £9 per hour, with correspondingly increased rates for team and section leaders. Human factors are taken into account from the planning and design stages onwards. That includes the basics, from the eye-friendly lighting, comfortable chairs and plenty of space to the imaginative little things such as the non-spill BT cup which Peter gently mocks.

Peter, you said you were almost won over to a career in telemarketing. Perhaps another visit would take you that extra step. Certainly here you'd be working with a tremendous bunch of people in an exciting and growing industry. KATHLEEN DOBIE  
Director  
BT Newcastle Call Centre  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Sir: The development of call centres and flexible working generally will produce an increasingly stratified workforce. While a majority of people will still enjoy tenured employment, there will be an increasing contrast with the lower-paid and less secure.

The United States has provided the model. There are more jobs, but also increasing inequality, uncertainty and long hours for the lower paid.

There are benefits for employers and employees in flexible approaches to employment, but these must not be at the expense of a new disadvantaged group. It is the responsibility of government to provide a strong enough framework to ensure that this



Welsh Portraits No 6: From left to right, Anne Rogers, Louise Fenn, Ceris Davies, Kathryn Game, Joanne Edwards from Bedwas in the Rhymney Valley, prepare for a night out  
Geraint Lewis

does not happen, which is likely to mean developing a European approach to labour relations. JOHN ORFORD  
Manchester

## Rail disasters

Sir: Your report on the Virgin train that "ran out of puff" (4 January) is indeed farcical, but is not without precedent.

One day in January last year I boarded a Regional Railways North East train at Durham, bound for Newcastle upon Tyne, normally just twenty minutes up the main line. Two hours later I arrived in Newcastle, cold, enraged, and very late for work. The train had run out of diesel about two hundred yards after leaving the only stop on the Durham-Newcastle route, at Chester-le-Street.

The train, unable to reverse the trifling distance to Chester-le-Street to allow passengers to disembark, sat blocking the main London-Edinburgh line for nearly ninety minutes. Passengers were prevented by train crew (rightly, I daresay) from disembarking and walking back along the line to the platform, on grounds of safety. It occurred to me as I

stood shivering in the corridor - for there had been no seats available as a result of the usual overcrowding, and the heating had been switched off - that if Regional Railways staff were so incompetent as to let their locomotive run out of fuel, what was to stop them routinely neglecting other basic aspects of running a train service, such as rolling-stock maintenance and safety procedures?

At last a spare locomotive was sent to tow us up to Newcastle Central. It did not come as a huge surprise that the coupling gear on the front of our train was damaged to the point of uselessness, and that therefore the towing engine would have to go first to Durham and return to push us to Newcastle from the rear. This added an extra half-hour to our journey time. DR DOMINIC WATT  
Leeds

## Sex on TV

Sir: Rhys Williams says, "The 9pm watershed is well understood" ("Too much sex on TV, viewers say", 7 January). I recently complained to the BBC about the episode of *Birds of a Feather* broadcast at 8.30pm

on 23 November last year on precisely those grounds. Mr Fraser Steel of the BBC told me that "Although 9pm is the pivotal point in the evening's television, the earlier a programme is placed the more suitable it is likely to be for children to watch on their own". This is the first indication that I've ever had that the 9pm watershed is flexible.

The BBC wants to portray the changing composition and varied family values which make up Britain in 1999. However, when it comes to complaints they have a quaint 1950s view of family life. Mr Steel went on to tell me that "the BBC expect parents to share responsibility at all times of the day for assessing whether or not programmes should be seen by younger viewers".

Mr Steel and his colleagues in the BBC complaints department apparently live in a Reichian world where mothers don't have to work, fathers are always home in time for tea and all under 16-year-olds are safely tucked up in bed at half past eight. DAVID HALLAM MEP  
(Herefordshire and Shropshire, Lab)  
Brussels

## In the minefields

Sir: We were appalled that allegations have been made or assumed of Mines Advisory Group involvement of any kind with accusations recently made that British or other government spies may be operating in Kurdish regions of Iraq (report, 8 January).

The Mines Advisory Group is an impartial, politically neutral, civilian, humanitarian organisation, registered as a charity. MAG is dedicated to stopping the loss of life and limb caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance. We do not operate in or close to known sensitive areas such as borders. Our sole focus is to return safe land to poor communities so as to reduce the suffering that landmines cause. This is the reason for our presence in northern Iraq and in many other regions of the world.

There is absolutely no basis for the allegations that have been made. The UN and of course the British government are both fully aware of this. LOU McGRATH  
Executive Director  
Mines Advisory Group  
Cockermouth, Cumbria

## IN BRIEF

Sir: Perhaps the reason the Bishop of St Albans suggested that young people might think the words "as if" in the Churches Advertising Network poster referred to a pop group ("The reverend revolutionaries", 7 January) is that As If is, in fact, an up and coming Christian band, quite well known to young people who listen to Christian music. AILSA M. WALKER  
Sevenoaks, Kent

Sir: I hope Hugh Rogers' friends have noted that he is not sending millennium cards on 1 January 2000 (letter, 6 January) and has thereby counted himself out of party invitations. Away with such pederasty! Life is for living, and is fragile enough without allowing mathematical fundamentalists to intimidate us out of our generally accepted usages. ETURNBULL  
Gosforth, Northumberland

Sir: A measure of hypocrisy may on occasion perhaps be necessary to show that one believes in high standards of behaviour, even if it is difficult sometimes to live up to them.

Even so, it rather sticks in the throat to see members of the US Senate taking a solemn oath "to do impartial justice", when this could hardly be further from the intention of many. MICHAEL J EGAN  
Warrington, Greater Manchester

## Royal pictures

Sir: Philip Hensher's article "Excuse me, Ma'am, they're our pictures" (8 January) describes the Royal Collection as "of incalculable interest and value, but like an iceberg, largely unseen".

Last year just under 6 million people visited the palaces and residences in which it is displayed. To suggest the whole lot should be in one of the national museums or galleries - and you would still have to pay an admission charge - would mean stripping out all the major works of art from Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Holyroodhouse, Hampton Court Palace, the Tower of London, Kew Palace, Osborne House and Sandringham. I do not think this would be acceptable to the millions of people from all over the United Kingdom and abroad who visit these palaces and residences to see the Royal Collection in situ.

All the collections of national significance in this country receive substantial taxpayers' money; the Royal Collection receives none and relies for its upkeep solely on the revenue generated from admission charges to the various palaces and residences. Finally, may I say that the Queen does not own the Royal Collection personally but as sovereign, and as such holds the collection in trust for her successors and the nation. DICKIE ARBITER  
Assistant Press Secretary  
to The Queen  
Buckingham Palace

## Arms to Africa

Sir: Tony Blair is currently visiting South Africa with a view to establishing relations with president-in-waiting Thabo Mbeki. He is also there to secure UK defence contracts. South Africans are outraged by their government's intention to spend billions on weapons purchases, including £700m on British Aerospace/Saab Gripen fighters at £700m and possibly another £300m on BAe Hawks.

As one South African economist, Terry Crawford-Brown, has put it: "People cannot eat warships, warplanes or tanks. Issues of human security relating to people - access to health services, clean water, jobs etc must take priority over the traditional notions of military security. Fortunately there is no military threat to South Africa. Yet the very real threat to security by poverty undermines our still fragile transition to democracy."

Talk of industrial participation benefits has been described as a smoke screen. Expenditure could be better used in education, housing and health.

Once again the short-term interests of UK arms export companies are placed above social, economic and humanitarian concerns and once again Tony Blair leaves his government open to the suggestion that policy is manipulated by the arms exporters.

RACHEL HARFORD  
Joint Co-ordinator  
Campaign Against Arms Trade  
London N4

## Girl of the year

Sir: Although I cannot claim to have made a count of girls' names in the year's headlines (Miles Kingston, 5 January), I have a strong impression that the top girl's name of 1998 was Prudence. DAVID WALLACE  
Hove, East Sussex

## MISSING



Jeffrey and Jennifer Bramley

The Two Sisters

Evening News

Continued from page 1

Like the police, Mr Bodle thinks it is possible that the Bramleys are being helped, though definitely not by a family member. And he agrees that public sympathy may be hampering the police investigation. He has been told that even former police officers have said they would not arrest the Bramleys, but would give them money to help them on their way.

However, he says, the only real solution is for the Bramleys and the children to return home. The situation is putting them and their extended family under great stress. "Every night you go to bed thinking maybe they will come back tomorrow."

An appeal for the Bramleys' return

## Love on the run

Continued from page 1

Thick curtains are closed over the front windows of the Bramleys' home on the Maltings, a private estate of modest houses crammed too closely together. Only a few neighbours were aware of the Bramleys' desperate battle with social services. As one puts it, all they saw was two lively little girls with apparently devoted parents.

Many locals share the public's ambivalence about the Bramleys' "crime". One woman thought Jade and Hannah were children from a previous marriage, until she heard them calling Jenny and Jeff Mum and Daddy. Though friendly, the Bramleys were private; most neighbours found out that they were fostering only after

their disappearance. She saw nothing to suggest that the couple lacked parenting skills. "We don't know all the facts," she says. "But the girls always looked happy and well looked after." And she adds: "What the Bramleys have done, well, it's not like a real crime, is it?"

One lawyer who specialises in child care cases wonders what will happen if the Bramleys succeed in staying on the run for a year, or even two. If the children are well and happy, and have become even more attached to their "unsuitable" foster parents, will the courts still consider separation to be in their best interests? But Cambridge social services points out that its decision

to remove the children was endorsed by the courts, and it will defend that stance. The children's current lifestyle, a spokesman says, can only be doing them harm.

If Jeff and Jenny are as logical as Dave Bodle says, they have probably concluded that eventually they will have to come home and hand the children over. Perhaps in their distress they are spinning out one final family holiday (with steam train trips and other treats), clinging hopelessly to moments, and children, they cannot keep. An act of love or selfishness? Probably a bit of both.

Mr Bodle asks the Bramleys to call the National Missing Persons helpline, 0500 700 700



The Rev Jack Cooper, who saw them



# THE INDEPENDENT

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## The Government's risky gap between rhetoric and reality

THE "LINE in the sand" is one of the great malapropisms of contemporary British politics. John Major was forever trying to "draw a line under" his troubles only to have another lorry-load of ordure tipped over him. But he and his spinners sometimes got their Gulf war metaphors confused and said he was drawing a line in the sand - which hardly gave the intended impression of finality.

This week Tony Blair drew his line - on a beach in the Seychelles. A resolute article in yesterday's *Independent*, a no-nonsense speech in South Africa, and a tale of everyday muscular heroism rescuing a Danish holiday-maker from the treacherous currents, were designed to present the Prime Minister in his full "strong leader" regalia. Heavy casualties have been sustained, but the names of Mandelson, Robinson and Wheeler have been inscribed on a wooden panel headed "They gave their all for New Labour", and the strong leader carries on, sadder but undaunted.

The tone is now like a comic-strip Churchill: "There are bound to be setbacks. We will face them, determinedly. There are bound to be attacks. We will respond to them, robustly." And there was one wonderfully double-edged sentence in yesterday's article: "We will continue to be for the future, not for the past." The trouble is that the past ain't what it used to be: the past used to mean the Conservatives and Old Labour, now New Labour has a past as well, and Mr Blair wants to distance himself from the unhappy bits of it, and especially the events of the past three weeks.

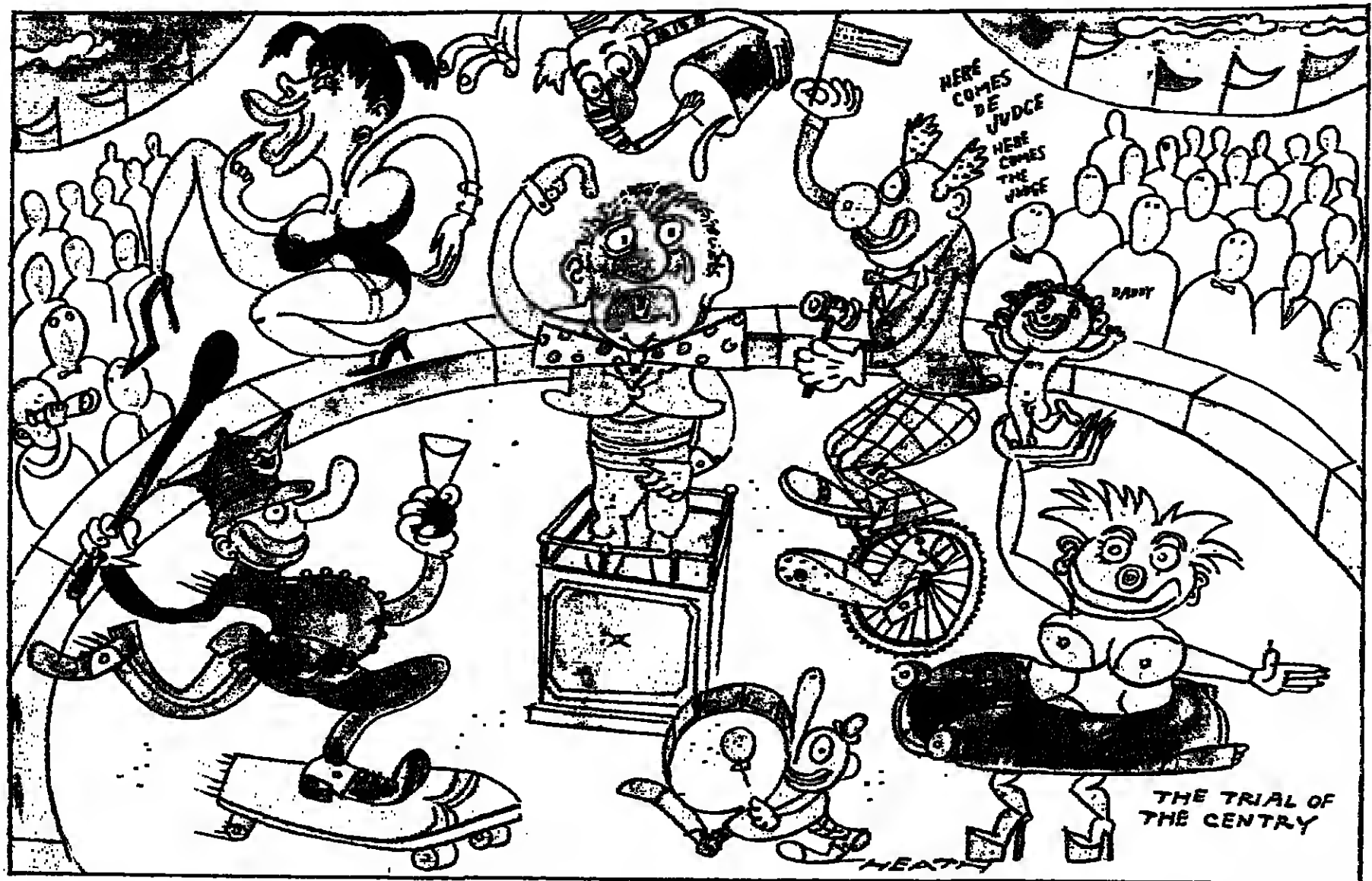
The Affair of Mr Mandelson's Mortgage cannot be quite so easily pushed into the dusty filing cabinet marked "Historical Interest Only", despite the Britannia building society's convenient absorption of the former Trade and Industry Secretary yesterday. For one thing, Mr Mandelson, in his attempt to put the affair behind him, said he wanted to get on with "rebuilding my political career".

It would be rash to predict Mr Mandelson's early return to the Cabinet, but it seems unlikely that Mr Blair will not find some use for his undoubted skills. Which means that questions about his conduct, and about his understanding of the central concept in public probity, the appearance of a conflict of interest, continue to be pertinent.

The damage done to the Government depends on the size of the gap between rhetoric and reality: they are the anode and the cathode and, when the electricity of public opinion is passed through them, the wider the gap the bigger the spark and the more destructive the explosion.

Mr Blair promised that his Government would be different, and he promised that things would be better. It may be unfair to discern no difference between Labour and its Tory predecessors, but the change has not been big enough or "radical" enough to justify New Labour's rhetoric.

Let us retain a sense of perspective. "Labour lead slumps to 23 points" is hardly the kind of headline which warns Mr Blair of impending meltdown. But *The Independent's* soundings among our panel of former Tory swing voters in Redditch, which we report today, suggest that the early cracks may run deep.



## The Tories must feminise their party

GETTING MORE women into Parliament could be the Conservative Party's only hope. After all, as the old feminist slogan had it, they could hardly make a worse job of it than the men, could they? There are only 14 women Tory MPs, and they include all the party's best performers: Ann Widdecombe, Theresa May, Angela Browning, Gillian Shephard and Teresa Gorman. So somebody needs to find the shrewd Pfiom Jenkins a by-election to fight, urgently. Then she and Miss Widdecombe can fight a leadership contest.

The problem is, how to do it? The Labour Party did it the best way, which was to go for a strong dose of positive discrimination and have it struck down by the courts after large numbers of women had been selected. That meant that the party did not - in the end - have to defend the indefensible, namely the exclusion of men on the grounds of their sex, and yet ended up with the right outcome in the form of 101 female MPs.

The fact that a quarter of Labour's MPs are women, however, has had disappointingly little effect on the male-dominated and family-unfriendly House of Commons. True, the Labour benches and even the Cabinet look as though they are inhabited by relatively normal people, while the Tory side and the Shadow Cabinet look like the boys and prefects of a single-sex school - albeit with a

few token girls having been allowed into the sixth form. But the modernisation of Westminster's archaic working practices is said to have been blocked - by the House's first woman Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, who has shown all Margaret Thatcher's lack of sympathy towards women who have not yet made it to the top.

That should not put the Tories off their quest to feminise their party from top to bottom. Of course, they cannot go down Labour's women-only shortlist route. So far, though, all that they have proposed in order to present themselves as modern, fresh and representative is a "target" of 250 women candidates at the next election.

We should be a little more convinced of the Conservatives' sincerity if the person in charge of establishing this feminist base camp on the slopes of their electoral Everest were someone other than Roger Freeman, the Blythe-creamed former minister whose main achievement is being mistaken for Cecil Parkinson.

## The modern mail

ONCE UPON a time, e-mail was geeky, adolescent and unconvincing, with all its funny conventions, such as using ":" to denote smiling and "lol" for "laugh out loud". But it is taking off, as we report today, with the British the biggest e-mailers of Europe. It has found its niche, an affectionate form in between the letter and the phone call, enabling people to keep in touch at times that suit the rhythms of modern life. Welcome to the e-world.

# We must pardon Private Daly, the last man shot for mutiny

MOST OF you will never have heard of Private James Joseph Daly. There is no immediate reason why you should. A soldier dead for 76 years, he is just one of the British soldiers who have been shot and killed in the century. He is a tiny footnote in British imperial history, of interest to a small group of military historians. But for his life and death illustrate a much bigger story, one that goes to the heart of a very complicated relationship.

But I will come to all that later. First the simple facts of James Daly's life: a native of County Westmeath, in what was then British-ruled Ireland, Daly was a private in the Connaught Rangers, a regiment that has served in the British army since the 1700s. Joining the British army for the proverbial "shilling a day" was the escape route from poverty for tens of thousands of Irishmen down the years. They fought in every corner of the empire, subduing the natives and imposing the Pax Britannica.

The courage of the Irishmen who fought for Britain in the First and Second World Wars was largely ignored at home. It didn't fit with the prevailing nationalist view of the past. Indeed it took until last November's Remembrance Services before we saw the Queen and the Irish President, Mary McAleese, pay tribute to their memory at Messines Ridge. It was, we were told, an occasion in which the Irish dead were honoured by the people of Ireland. Three-quarters of a century on, we finally reach a point where the Irish state feels able to commemorate Irishmen who had died fighting for Britain.

We have always suffered from a convenient amnesia about Irishmen fighting on the side of the old enemy.

I remember a neighbour in Dublin once telling me how her father, who had served at the Somme, had been shunned by local nationalists when he came home from the war. Others became targets and were shot by the IRA. But the simple fact is that the British shilling was all that saved thousands of families from starvation in the tenements of Dublin and the poverty-stricken lands west of the river Shannon. Tradition also had a big role to play. My neighbours' grandfather had served in the Boer war; she still keeps a brush he used for cleaning his uniform. In fact the tradition of southern Irishmen serving in British regiments continues to this day, though not anywhere like on the same scale as before independence.

But back to Private Daly. At the end of June 1920, Daly and the rest of his battalion were stationed at Jullundur, near Amritsar, in British India. The infamous massacre by British troops had taken place only a short time before. The area was seething with nationalist anger, and the soldiers of the Connaught Rangers were an important part of the British garrison. There is little indication of what Daly and his colleagues thought about the massacre. But it would appear they were more concerned with events at home in Ireland. The previous year IRA men had ambushed a group of policemen at Soloheadbeg in County Tipperary. The killings signalled the start of a new, bitter phase in the Irish Troubles.

Within a few months the IRA was launching ambushes on British troops and Irish policemen across the country. It is said that one of the Connaught Rangers, home on holidays from India, was attending a football match when he was held up and searched by

counters misapprehensions, please get in touch with me. Whatever the exact incident, Private Daly and up to 150 other men staged a mutiny. It appears to have been a fairly badly organised affair beginning at Jullundur, then spreading to the mountains. A green flag was raised and the mutineers named their HQ "Liberty Hall", after the headquarters of James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army that rebelled against the British in 1916. The army chaplain, Father Baker, was the first officer to recognise the inherent danger in the mutiny: should it succeed the local Indian population would surely be emboldened to strike out at the British. This would give the British a powerful reason to deal ruthlessly with the mutineers. The priest moved quickly to try and defuse the situation. He persuaded Daly and the others to hand in their weapons on the promise that all would be forgotten about.

For a while this appeared to work. But tensions rose again. Some say Daly was persuaded by his colleagues, fearful that without weapons they were now at the mercy of the officers. Another theory is that the promise to "forget about everything" had been broken by the officers. Daly and about 40 men drew bayonets and advanced on the arsenal where the weapons were stored. On the way they were confronted by British officers who opened fire. Three men were hit. Two died quickly from their wounds, another died later in hospital from fever. At least two of the dead may have been simply returning from their mess when they wandered accidentally into the line of fire. But the gunfire ended the mutiny. Daly and his followers surrendered and were led away to the notorious prison at Luck

British troops. The incident shocked him. A British soldier being searched by British soldiers? What he saw was a country that was fast becoming an armed camp, where everybody was expected to take a side. Being a British soldier made him a target for the IRA, yet the British troops in Ireland regarded him as one of the enemy. As the conflict escalated reports of atrocities by British forces began to reach the Connaught Rangers camp at Jullundur. The precise spark for what happened next is still debated by historians. Some suggest it was a series of attacks by the irregular British forces, known as Black and Tans, which infuriated Daly and his friends. Others believe it was a massacre by regular troops in Dublin which precipitated the crisis. At this point let me add a personal note: if anybody has further information on the mutiny, anything that illuminates the facts or



FERGAL KEANE

To fight or to run, to follow orders or refuse - sooner or later most troops in battle confront these issues

## Kosova children appeal to Independent readers

Kosovar children refugees in Albania face cold, hunger and disease as winter deepens. Many are in deep shock, having witnessed their parents and relatives killed in the awful atrocities from which they fled. Albania, the poorest country in Europe, has few resources to support the massive influx of refugees.

### Your action will help children who have lost everything

The European Children's Trust needs your swift response to set up an emergency centre in Shkoder, northern Albania, to help 2500 refugees. Our centre will provide basic necessities and schooling to give security to the confused and frightened refugee children living in Shkoder. These are children and families whose homes have been lost, perhaps forever. Special help is needed for the traumatised children who have witnessed terrible crimes, and must now start to live a normal life.

£30 could buy emergency medicine and food supplements for 5 Kosovar refugee children for a week.

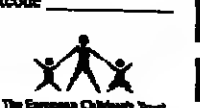
Please send what you can to save the displaced Kosovar children this winter. Call 0800 056 3686 now or cut the coupon below

I enclose £30 my choice £\_\_\_\_\_ to save Kosovar children. (Cheques to The European Children's Trust please). Or debit my Access/Visa/CAF card.

Card no. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Please return to: Tanya Barrow, 16/A1, Kosova Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KB8359, 644 Queen Street, London, EC4B 4AR.

Or call 0800 056 3686 NOW.  
Please act NOW - your gift will give hope





## MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Bill Clinton on trial • Charlie Whelan's resignation • NHS in crisis • Trading in the euro • A royal marriage

## BILL CLINTON ON TRIAL

US opinion about the procedures that the Senate should employ in trying the impeachment of the President

## THE NEW YORK TIMES

AFTER THE strife in the House, the opening of the Senate trial of President Clinton looked reassuringly decorous. Senator Strom Thurmond, who was born only 34 years after Andrew Johnson's impeachment, swore in the big, calm-looking Chief Justice, William Rehnquist. The leaders' decision to tamp down party feuding and call a bipartisan caucus of all senators for this morning brought a surprisingly promising end to a grimly historic day that few expected to see. It is too early to declare that this marks the emergence of a national statesmanship that has been missing in the House and at the White House. But the Senate has a momentous opportunity today to adopt rules that would shorten the trial, avoid months of redundant testimony and allow passage of a censure that the public and the evidence demand.

## DALLAS MORNING NEWS

THIS TRIAL will be one of the most monumental tests the US Senate has ever faced. Unfortunately, Americans may not get to see the full deliberations as senators reach their verdict about President Clinton's fate. Without on-the-scene cameras, the public will be left with only "sound bites" provided after the fact for the news shows, hardly befitting the complexity of the moment. The final deliberations must remain open to the public. This rare moment should prove a valuable civics lesson for the nation on both the Constitution and the importance of character in government.

## THE WASHINGTON POST

THE HOUSE, in our opinion, erred in its decision to impeach Mr. Clinton. But an impeachment by the House demands of the Senate a proceeding of sufficient rigor to satisfy the more moderate of Mr. Clinton's political foes - should the president ultimately be acquitted - that the Senate, at the least, did not shrink its

obligation to face up to his odious conduct. For this reason, House managers should be given an opportunity to present senators with the case against Mr. Clinton in a manner that does not trivialize his behavior by trivializing its presentation.

As long as a majority of senators believe that additional testimony is necessary in order to inform their final votes, it seems reasonable to permit whatever witnesses the House wishes to call. The Senate can and should end the trial as soon as a majority of senators become convinced that hearing from more witnesses will not aid them in their determinations of how to vote.

## THE ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

AS BILL Clinton approaches the zenith/nadir of his political career, all eyes should be glued on the opening of his trial in the Senate of the United States, its solemn ceremonies and once-in-a-century rituals, and the general national reaction is: Ho hum.

Despite the usual ponderous music and basso profundo voices of the announcers and commentators, the whole scene has all the solemnity of picking a number in the take-out line. The stage may be imposing, but somehow the central character has managed to shrink everything down to his own superficial dimension - the Capitol, the Constitution, the issues, the historical background, even the lies. The setting seems out of scale - too grand for the mediocre president being tried.

## THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

IMPARTIAL JUSTICE? Hmm. That's what 100 US senators have just sworn to pursue in the trial of Bill Clinton.

What I want to know is this: Will these five-score men and women abide by their pledge, or have they exposed themselves - as the President they're trying has done - to charges of lying under oath. (David Finkle)

## Clean up this shambles

## NEW STATESMAN

CHARLIE WHELAN's departure, along with that of Geoffrey Robinson, will grieve Gordon Brown as much as Peter Mandelson's loss will grieve Tony Blair. Although Mandelson, an elected MP and a Cabinet minister, was much the more influential figure, Whelan, too, had been at the centre of New Labour since its creation. There is a palpable sense of relief among ministers that both Mandelson and Whelan have left the heart of government. But before they toast the purge, they should recall one significant point: most newspapers are essentially hostile to this government. One of the myths about New Labour is that all journalists are under its spell. Yet I can remember countless occasions when Mandelson and Whelan, working separately, prevented damaging stories from taking off or managed to get front pages helpful to the Government. The mantle of the spin doctor now falls to Alastair Campbell alone. (Steve Richards)

## DAILY RECORD

CHARLIE WHELAN knew he had to go. But the Government is not, as the Tories claim, falling apart at the seams. However, when he returns from South Africa, Mr Blair must clean up the shambles.

Whelan was a star of the election campaign, successfully spinning Gordon Brown's campaign to reassure the better-off voters that he could be trusted not to raise their taxes. He was a doggedly loyal henchman and a first-class communicator of complicated politics. However, Brown is still too powerful for his personal position to be seriously undermined.

Now that two of the prime spin doctors and in-fighters have gone, New Labour should make its New Start. A truce has to be enforced on the vendettas that divert attention from the Government's achievements. The Cabinet could actually give the impression of being a team.

## THE EXPRESS

NEW LABOUR is spinning out of control. Political infighting played a major role in



CHARLIE WHELAN'S RESIGNATION

Verdicts on the resignation of Gordon Brown's press secretary and the consequences to New Labour

the collapse of the last Conservative government, and what destroyed it can just as easily destroy Labour.

If, as the Prime Minister tells us, New Labour is "bigger than any one individual", then anyone who undermines him or the Government's integrity must go. And if that includes senior ministers, such as Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson, it

certainly includes advisers and press aides such as Charlie Whelan.

## THE TIMES

GORDON BROWN no longer needs Charlie Whelan. Like the already departed

Geoffrey Robinson, Mr Whelan belongs to Mr Brown's Prince Hal days. The roistering hand of lads ate pizzas, watched football and plotted a new economic strategy, albeit in the elegance of the Grosvenor House rather than the more lowly Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap.

That was fine for opposition, but, in office, Mr Brown has outgrown this phase. So their resignations are a liberation, a chance for Mr Brown to develop as Chancellor, to demonstrate that he has "turned away my former self" and "those that kept me company".

The danger is that Mr Brown will, instead, see the departures of Mr Whelan and Mr Robinson as a personal defeat and a victory for his enemies. So he may turn even more upon himself. (Peter Riddell)

## DAILY MAIL

THE CRASHING fall of Charlie Whelan hopefully marks the beginning of the end of the era of the spin doctor. And not before time. Politics could well do without this breed of hatchmen who do little to further the smooth running of government but do much to distort the truth. Gordon Brown is unlikely to risk resurrecting the spin doctor corpse when he chooses Mr Whelan's successor. (Sir Bernard Ingham)

## THE GUARDIAN

OF COURSE, Charles Alexander James Whelan, lovable or unlovable as he may be, is no innocent. He is the Vinnie Jones of spin. Relatively untroubled by professional scruples, he was a lethally effective operator on behalf of Gordon Brown, as capable of brutal assassinations of "enemies" as he was brilliant at projecting - and protecting - his friends. But, in the end, he made too many enemies.

He was perceived, rightly or wrongly, as someone who imported the bitter tactics of Seventies sectarian union fighting into Nineties government. Though he served Mr Brown well, he knew that he was becoming a liability.

When the fate of a treasury press officer threatens to overshadow the launch of a single European currency it is time to bow out.

## THE NHS IN CRISIS

Views on the shortages of emergency services, hospital beds and nurses this winter in the National Health Service

## THE MIRROR

ALL SORTS of shortages have created the crisis in the health service. But one symbolises all that is wrong - the shortage of nurses. Years of Tory neglect and deliberate cuts in many ways. Labour should have known all this when it came to power yet it is only today that Health Secretary Frank Dobson reveals the crisis. He is rightly proud that more nurses are being trained yet still there will not be enough of them.



the National Health Service as a cornucopia, available always to dispense limitless care to the sick for next to nothing. There is less emphasis laid on its obvious limitations and no emphasis at all on the obligation of all citizens to provide at least some primary health care within the home.

## THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

NO HEALTH service, however richly endowed, can hope to cater for citizens who, struck by a common ailment, see no alternative but to seek a hospital bed. To some extent Mr Dobson and his political colleagues have brought this on their own heads. There is a disposition constantly to present

rush of patients, whether due to outbreaks of infectious diseases or, say, a spate of accidents in icy weather. And the more spare capacity hospitals maintain, the less efficient they are. In the end, there is no "right" number of beds. It is up to ministers, NHS officials and public opinion to decide on the cost effectiveness of the NHS and its ability to cope with sudden peaks in demand.

## THE TIMES

However many more nurses are recruited, more hospitals built and wards opened, the public's expectations will always exceed the NHS's capacity. Anecdotes of people with flu ringing 999 typify the culture of entitlement that now exists. Mr Dobson is trying to feed this appetite by spending an extra £21bn on health over the next three years. This will merely fuel, rather than control, public expectations.

## THE ECONOMIST

TO MEET the public's expectations, the NHS may have to maintain a greater amount of spare capacity to cope with a

## TRADING IN THE EURO

The European press evaluate the euro after the beginning of dealing in the new currency

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG  
Germany

THE WORLD financial markets greet the euro with strong gains. Europe's common currency wins noticeable value compared to the dollar on the very first trading day. And the euro is celebrated with strong gains on the stock and bond markets as well. No doubt: the euro has survived its first baptism by fire.

## LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

THERE IS still a lot to play for. What happens for example if one of the euro-zone countries is hit by economic difficulties which do not affect the others? The devaluation weapon is no longer open to us. So a localised shock could lead to sharp recession. Euroland does not have the American safety valve, where

workers can flee recession by moving from one state to another. And federal-style budgetary transfers are almost non-existent because the EU budget is Lilliputian by comparison with the US's.

LE MONDE  
France

THIS IS a message to the English: the ball is now in your court! The euro is waiting for you. The EU and its newborn money need you. You have always been highly sceptical toward the construction of Europe. You have always been dragging your feet to commit yourself to the European design. To you the EU was a "French idea", designed and run by a "continental bureaucracy" under a "German influence". Up till now you were willing to wait on the platform... You are in the habit of waiting for European trains to start moving. Now the euro is launched, it is time for you to join it.

## A ROYAL MARRIAGE

Comment following the announcement that Prince Edward is to marry Sophie Rhys-Jones

## THE EXPRESS

THE MEDIA must be careful not to hound the newlyweds. Marriages face all sorts of pressures in the best of circumstances; having every action picked over by a ravenous media won't help Sophie and Edward to get off to a proper start.

## THE SUN

SOPHIE'S LOOKS remind many of Diana, but there comparisons should end. Even her title could be sensitive. There could only ever be one People's Princess. The Queen must make Sophie a darling Duchess.

## THE GUARDIAN

AFTER ANNE, Charles and Andrew we know better than to believe in fairy tales. Our thoughts should be reserved for Sophie Rhys-Jones. Numerous precedents suggest that it cannot be an easy thing to

marry into the Royal Family, even at such an inconsequential level. The less she and Edward make of it the better.

## THE MIRROR

WELL, I don't know about you but I haven't slept. There I was putting away the Christmas decorations, wondering what I'd next hang from my bare walls, when I heard the joyous news. And with teary eyes I reached for my bunting and sewing kit and got cracking. Hurrah! for Edward and Sophie, I say. (Brian Reader)

## DAILY MAIL

SOPHIE COMMITTED her usual fashion faux pas yesterday, wearing another pair from her huge collection of round-toed, dumpy-heeled shoes. They look as though they belong to a woman twice her age, and do nothing for her ankles. (Trudi Wallace)

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK



"I am not scared of flying. I am scared of crashing." Helen Baxendale, actress (above)

"We have had more back-biting in the Government in the last few weeks than you could cram into an average episode of Dallas." William Hague, Tory leader

"Our Test team needs someone to stand back and not be the father figure or the friend to pat them on the back or give them a cuddle. He should give them a kick up the backside now and again." Geoffrey Boycott, former cricketer

"I don't need a witness to tell if this is a blue dress or not." Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat

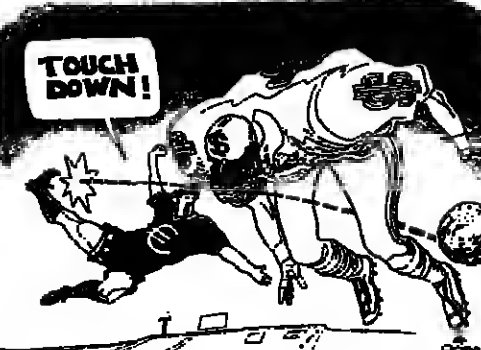
"If I know sex is going to happen, I try to distract my husband with a cup of tea and a biscuit." Unnamed pensioner on sex on TV

"It takes two to spin. A spin doctor is only as good as his contacts." Derek Draper, former spin doctor

## THE VIEWS OF THE WORLD



PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, US



DER STANDARD Austria



LE MONDE France



THE ECONOMIST UK

## MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

POTTSTOWN MERCURY  
US

OHMIGOD, THEY stole Kenny... And Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Chef, too. Fans of the Comedy Central cartoon show South Park may recognize the familiarity of that line from the show, but to police, it describes a theft being investigated in Bally. The theft involves a holiday display of figures representing the South Park cast from the lawn of a home at Elm and North Church streets early Monday morning. As the home-crafted South Park scene's creator Liz Hilleagass said, "It was a South Park manger-type scene". The fans of the Comedy Central cartoon hit spent \$350 and considerable time

making five figures from tomato cages and wire, and dressing them in appropriate clothing and masks.

## THE TIMES OF INDIA

FOR PATIENTS proceeding to the United States for surgery, there is disquieting news. Surgeons are removing wrong parts of the body there, amputating the wrong foot, removing the wrong kidney and operating the wrong side of the brain. Patients' bodies are now being autographed to avoid what has come to be called "wrong-site surgery". Patients are writing "yes" on one leg and "no" on the other so the healthy leg is not eliminated

RESEARCH BY KATY GUEST



# The mobile way to keep my son on message

HERE'S A sad story. A friend's eight-year-old son was asked by his granny in the Shetland Isles what he wanted for his birthday. "A mobile," he squeaked excitedly on a crackling line to Harold's Wick on the Isle of Unst.

My friend lives in trundly Clapham where all her son's school friends apparently got mobiles for Christmas. Yes, I did say eight years old. According to the latest information from the Federation of Communications Services, the mobile communications industry body, kids are becoming as addicted to Vodaphones as their parents.

A week later the parcel arrived. It contained two coat-hangers from which six brightly coloured cardboard fishes were attached by lengths of string. "Dear Jasper,

Happy birthday. I hope you enjoy your fish mobile. Lots of love, Granny," said the message.

Call it a cop-out, but I've finally succumbed and betrayed all my long held and widely advertised principles - I bought my 15-year-old son a pager for Christmas.

"It isn't really for him," I told the man in the mobile shop. For some reason I felt I should justify the purchase. "It's for my peace of mind. Half the time I've no idea where he is. At least this way I shall be able to track him down." "If he calls back," the man in the mobile phone shop said laconically.

"Mum, you're a star," I was informed on Christmas morning. "It's well dry (ie really nice). Much better than Jack's." Why, what's wrong with Jack's, I asked. Aren't



**SUE ARNOLD**  
*I've finally succumbed and betrayed all my principles - I bought my 15-year-old son a pager*

they all the same? No apparently they're not. Jack's is dry (ie not very nice) because it doesn't automatically beam over the latest football

results and lottery numbers. If I'd known that the one I bought included those facilities, I should not have parted so readily with my 40 quid.

So far at least, the novelty hasn't worn off. When I beam my message (up to 80 characters including spaces) the charming girl at the Zap - it's not called a pager message-answering service by the way, it's called a Zap, don't ask me why, it's just another of its well dark facilities - my son returns the call immediately.

We're slowly getting the hang of it. Instead of making him call me back, which, he complained, costs him 10p, I can give the instructions direct to the Zap girl. Thus, "James, it's me, Mum. Don't forget you've got an appointment with the doc-

tor tomorrow at 10.15 about your verrucas."

It's surprising how much you can get into 80 characters including spaces. When I relayed that message about the verrucas to the Zap girl I found myself apologising for its unpleasant content. "Don't worry, you'd be surprised at some of the things we have to pass on," she said. "Sometimes we have to water them down a bit." I'm glad to hear it.

My son had a message the other day from his friend Buddy. What Buddy said to the Zap girl was: "Listen dickhead call Buddy soonest or he'll kick your arse." What the Zap girl relayed to James came out as "James, call Mr Buddy as soon as possible or he'll kick your bottom." My daughter tells me that the

latest wheeze in her office is to think up truly preposterous pager messages to test the reaction of the Zap girl. So far none of them has come up with anything too shocking to pass on.

The small Vietnamese child you ordered from South East Asia Leisure Services Inc has now arrived and is ready for collection at the cargo office in terminal three Heathrow, "aroused only the mild comment that it probably wouldn't fit into 80 characters including spaces. Would it be possible to abbreviate the name of the company?"

We'd better make the most of the pager before, peer-group pressure and all that, we have to upgrade to a proper mobile. Now that really is going to be a headache, not just because of the huge choice - two-tone,

leopard-skin, with or without e-mail, Internet, personal computer, word processing and fax facilities - but because of the reputed danger from radiation. I read an article recently about the gruesome effect that low-level microwaves can have on mobile phone users.

To my technically untutored ear, a low-level microwave is a small oven for heating up shepherd's pie or cooking meringues, but the article went on to describe the research into low-level microwave mobile phone radiation carried out by Professor Henry Lei at the University of Washington in Seattle on small rodents.

Headaches, disorientation, not being able to remember the Prime Minister's name. It was chilling. Give me a Zap girl any day.

## THE SATURDAY PROFILE

WILLIAM REHNQUIST, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES

# Playing poker with a nation

THOSE WHO contend that history has a twisted sense of humour found their perfect example this week in the spectacle of William Hubbs Rehnquist being sworn in to preside as an "impartial" judge over the impeachment trial of President Clinton.

The least of it is that Rehnquist, a highly ideological conservative, was sworn to judicial impartiality by the presiding officer and oldest member of the Senate, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, a man so far to the right that 51 years ago he ran for President as a "Dixiecrat" in protest against the very modest moves the Democratic party (to which Thurmond then belonged) had made in the direction of conceding civil rights to black Americans.

Another irony lies in the fact that Rehnquist, as an amateur historian, published a book in 1992, *Grand Inquests*, about the two previous most important impeachment trials in American history: those of Chief Justice Samuel Chase in 1805, and of President Andrew Johnson in 1868. The book is being republished, and has already reached the bestseller lists, but Rehnquist has decided not to update it for fear of giving away his opinion on matters that could come up in the Clinton trial.

That has not stopped Washington journalists rushing to see if they can glean any hints from it about how Rehnquist will conduct the trial. The failure of bipartisan attempts to cut the trial process short means that Rehnquist is now bound to have considerable influence over the proceedings. For the senators, not normally short of a word or several hundred on most subjects, will be largely silenced in the impeachment trial. They will be taking part as jurors, and however much they may take part in offstage manoeuvring, in the trial itself they will be limited to submitting questions in writing through the Chief Justice.

The constitution prescribes that the President can only be found guilty on an impeachment by a two-thirds majority, that is, by 67 senators, which is 12 more than the present Republican majority of 55. Twenty-six rules have been handed down to guide the senators. But once the trial starts, they will be entering largely uncharted waters, so the Chief Justice's role will certainly be influential and could be decisive.

That is why the irony is so profound. For President Clinton is a relatively centrist Democrat, far from an extreme liberal by objective measures. But to the conservative Republicans who impeached him in the House of Representatives, and even more to the "movement conservatives", the Religious Right, the financial backers and ideological journalists who egg them on, Clinton is objectionable as a liberal.

Privately, Chief Justice Rehnquist certainly shares this opinion. He is an unashamed ideological conservative. He was sent to the Supreme Court 27 years ago as such by President Nixon, as part of a calculated plan on Nixon's part to end liberal domination of the Court. His voting

and his opinions as first a justice, then chief justice, have been reliably conservative. Indeed, while his impartiality should not be impugned, on a number of occasions he has even intervened judicially in the preliminaries of the President's investigation in ways that helped to bring Clinton before the bar of impeachment.

By the end of the 1960s, the Republicans, and conservatives generally, were furious at what they saw as the activist liberal

## LIFE STORY

**Born:** Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1 October, 1924.  
**Origins:** Swedish parents. Father a wholesale paper salesman.  
**Married:** Natalie Cornell (d 1991)  
**Children:** James, Janet, Nancy  
**Religion:** Lutheran  
**Military service:** Sergeant, Army Air Corps, 1943-46  
**Law career:** Assistant Attorney General, 1969, Supreme Court Justice 1972, Chief Justice 1986.  
**Passions:** Gilbert and Sullivan. His gown (right) is modelled on that of the lecherous Chief Justice in *Iolanthe*.  
**Plays:** Croquet and poker  
**On the last impeachment (1985):** Its operation "was less like that of a grand jury than like that of the manager of a political candidate's campaign looking into what charges might be made against a political opponent"



judgements of the "Warren Court" - the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren. Those decisions included the famous declaration, in the Brown case in 1954, that racial segregation was unconstitutional. But there were other decisions - banning prayer in schools, protecting the rights of criminal suspects against the police, endorsing affirmative action and mandating school busing in the interests of racial equality - that outraged conservatives scarcely less than Brown. President Nixon set out to destroy the liberal majority on the Supreme Court.

One of the longest-acting powers of a President lies in his ability to change the personnel, and so in the end the politics, of the Court. He can appoint justices, though they must then be confirmed by the Senate, after hearings, once fairly

perfunctory, but increasingly bitter and political in recent years, in part because of the way the process was politicised by Richard Nixon. Nixon had had luck with his first nominations, one of whom turned out to belong to an all-white country club and the other to be spectacularly mediocre (giving rise to the immortal defense that "mediocre people had a right to be represented on the Supreme Court, too"). But he still had time to put three more conservatives on the Court before he resigned to forestall his own impeachment.

One of them was William Rehnquist, who had been an assistant attorney-general in Nixon's own Department of Justice before Nixon appointed him to the Court in 1972.

He was, had always been and has remained an extreme conservative. One research group found that he had been consistently the most conservative justice on the Court, taking the conservative position (sometimes, admittedly, hard to define) in 85 per cent of cases.

Rehnquist grew up in Wisconsin, in the suburban, white middle-class world of Milwaukee, famous for its beer. German origins and northern European Protestant traditions. His parent were Swedish. Lutheran and of that mid-Western business conservatism that has given so much support to Ross Perot. Following High School he pursued an Ivy League education, first in political sciences at Stanford University and then to the traditionally liberal Harvard Law School, where he graduated top of his class. He then moved to Arizona, where they tend to resent the Federal government as if it were a colonial power, and practised law in Phoenix. There he became a friend and adviser of Senator Barry Goldwater, who ran for President as a conservative Republican candidate in 1964 and got trounced by Lyndon Johnson.

Rehnquist, even liberals agree, is un-stuffy and a pleasant enough man personally. Tall and now stooped, he hikes his loafers up on the table like a regular Westerner fellow, and used to wear his hair long, at least by the standards of judges. He has written, though not published, a detective novel, and he is fond of Gilbert and Sullivan; he will even preside over the impeachment in a gown he designed for himself (with gold bands to look like one he saw worn by the Lord Chancellor in a production of *Iolanthe*). He is also a keen amateur painter and a poker player.

He is, however, an unashamedly ideological judge and, moreover, that unusual animal, a pro-government conservative. The catch is that the government he favours is the state government, as opposed to the federal government of the United States. In this he is squarely in the tradition of southern conservatives who have always defended states' rights against Washington.

Not is his conservatism just a matter of abstract constitutional principles. As one writer put it, he invariably sides "with the



The world will be watching, but how impartial can Chief Justice William Hubbs Rehnquist really be? Katz

prosecution in criminal cases, with business in anti-trust cases, with employers in labour cases, and with the government in (freedom of) speech cases."

Paul Martin, a student of the Supreme Court at Oxford University, points out that Rehnquist has consistently voted for extending the death penalty, most recently even to mentally retarded killers and murderers who were juveniles when they killed. (Bill Clinton, as governor of Arkansas, signed the death warrant of a mentally retarded murderer. He has also steadily opposed abortion. But of all the positions he has taken, the one that has probably caused him most trouble was one he maintains was not his own.

A lot of the work of Supreme Court justices is done by "clerks", bright young lawyers, most of them graduates of elite law schools. In the 1950s Rehnquist, fresh out of Harvard Law School, clerked for Justice Robert Jackson, a New Dealer who was the chief US prosecutor at Nuremberg. Rehnquist wrote a memo arguing that the plaintiffs in the school desegregation cases (Brown and others associated with it) ought to fail because there was nothing unconstitutional about education that was "separate but equal", precisely the point the Warren Court rejected.

When Rehnquist was elevated by

President Reagan from within the ranks of the Supreme Court judges as Chief Justice in 1986, the Democrats brought this up against him. Rehnquist insisted he was setting forth Justice Jackson's opinion, not his own. Others have maintained, plausibly, that whether or not it was Jackson's opinion it was, after all, settled law at the time that segregation was legal, it was certainly Rehnquist's opinion at the time. The result was that the hearings held by the Senate on his appointment as chief justice, previously gentlemanly if not perfunctory, turned into a fierce ideological battle. In the end, Rehnquist was approved, but with the greatest number of votes against in history: 23 of the 98 senators voting voted against. The rough ride liberal senators gave to Nixon's solicitor-general, Robert Bork, whose nomination was withdrawn, has left a lasting scar on conservatives.

Not much has been made of it yet, but Rehnquist has not managed entirely to keep himself out of the political manoeuvring leading up to Clinton's impeachment. Originally, Janet Reno, the President's attorney-general, under a statute that has since been repealed by Congress, appointed Robert Fiske to be the independent counsel, as the prosecutor is known, to investigate the President's alleged involvement in the Whitewater land project.

Conservative Republicans in Congress, however, led by Senator Lauch Fairchild of North Carolina, wrote a letter to the Court complaining that Mr Fiske had not been tough enough, and it was Chief Justice Rehnquist who appointed the special three-man panel which chose Kenneth Starr as the independent counsel. The *Washington Post* has reported that the Court's rulings under Rehnquist have "worked against President Clinton and ultimately favoured independent counsel (special prosecutor) Kenneth Starr".

Rehnquist's ability as a lawyer and as a judge is unquestioned. He is a tight manager who has insisted that the justices' conferences, which once rambled on for days, are all over by lunchtime. He has also been known to cut counsellors off in mid-syllable if they exceeded the time he had allotted them for argument. He has a prodigious memory for the law, and is one of the fastest writers of opinions on the Court in recent history.

It is not his professional impartiality as a judge but his instincts that are in question. He has not hidden that they are those of a committed conservative ideologue. If the two personae should come into conflict in the cut and thrust of the trial, it will not go well for the President.

GODFREY HODGSON

## ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

22: LESLIE NIELSEN, COMIC ACTOR

THE INDEPENDENT does not intend to elevate the minor farceur Leslie Nielsen to hero status, surely? To which the answer is: "Yes, we do, and don't call us Shirley."

That stupid pun is probably what we remember best from the 1980 film *Airplane!* in which Nielsen played the doctor giving completely useless moral support to a stewardess and a passenger who are trying to land a plane after the crew has been struck down by food poisoning.

*Airplane!* was Nielsen's first comedy film, a glorious hour and a half in which the tall, distinguished-looking leading man, veteran of around 50 movies and an astonishing 1,500 TV films, as good as demolished his previous career and started all over again, heroically, at the age of 54.

To understand how successful Nielsen was in subverting his former screen image, try watching one of his earlier films, such as *Forbidden Planet*, with a straight face. In this 1956 film, Nielsen's Commander John J. Adams is interplanetary corporate man - a typical representative of buttoned-down America.

After a lifetime of movies like *Forbidden Planet*, casting Nielsen in *Airplane!* was a stroke of genius, by the directors David Zucker, Jim Abrahams, and Jerry Zucker, ranking alongside that exclamation mark. The actor, though, deserves the credit for understanding exactly what the part needed and providing it in spades, even though it meant he would never make another

serious movie as long as he lived. Nielsen played it absolutely straight, maintaining a look of utter conviction and sincerity - like a TV evangelist or minor politician - while talking absolute nonsense.

Nielsen's gift for this kind of deadpan performance, together with his trademark middle-America wardrobe of slacks and golf shoes, make him as distinctive a feature of the comic landscape of the past two

decades as Chaplin's tramp was 70 years ago. How long before art-house cinemas programme Lieutenant Frank Drebin retrospectives?

Nielsen, of course, would find the concept ludicrous. In his spurious 1993 autobiography *The Naked Truth*, he claims to have received the "Nobel Prize for Good Acting", three years after it was given to Charlie Chaplin "post-humously".

He says in his book that he decided to become an actor when, as a five-year-old, he went with his brothers to see the original *Frankenstein*.

"I learnt many of life's most important lessons from those Saturday morning movies," writes Nielsen. "Never get involved in a showdown with a cowboy wearing a white hat. Never stand up on a battlefield and say loudly, 'It's over. We won. Those cowards have gone.' And never trust a character whose head has to be bolted on."

One of those brothers went on to become deputy prime minister of Canada, according to Nielsen. But unlike much in the book - Nielsen's relationship with Elizabeth Taylor, how he discovered Steven Spielberg

photographing weddings and bar mitzvahs - this turns out to be true. "My brother Eric," writes Nielsen, "was the big disappointment in the family. He was so smart, so talented, he had so much to give to the world, but instead he became a politician."

Not that Nielsen is without ideals of his own. He's a student and admirer of the famous liberal lawyer Clarence Darrow (defender of the Texan schoolmaster who taught evolution) whom he's been portraying in a one-man show in Los Angeles.

But Nielsen tends not to talk too much about that if he can help it, preferring instead to don his slacks and add sweetly and harmlessly to the gaiety of nations. In which there is a kind of heroism, surely.





## THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



New Year, new you? It isn't quite.  
The waistband feels a tad too tight,  
The head is fugged, the wallet's thin  
And resolutions clog the bin.  
That's when the meter men appear  
With taxman bringing up the rear.  
Best thing to do is stay in bed  
And send your clone to work instead.

It's chaos on the trading floor...  
A little bundle at the door  
Of kisses, curses, custard pies -  
Midst mingled aahs and skeptic sighs  
The baby euro's trundled in  
While Britain grumbles at the din.

A Saxon chieftain and his horse  
Lay undisturbed in chalky ground  
For fourteen hundred years or so  
And slept the centuries away.  
Much later, over fens and farms  
Around the Suffolk air force base,  
Another German warrior flew  
Then fell to earth and lost the day.  
"Well met," the Saxon soldier said:  
"We've changed a bit since oxen carts  
But not so fast you'd notice it.  
They take their time around these parts  
Where warriors younger now than you  
Still gird themselves for battle zones.  
Lie down, young flier. The day may come  
When men will marvel at your bones."

Impeachment. It's a curious word,  
Most often found with President  
Confusing what he said he meant  
When evidence is later heard.  
I used to think, some years ago,  
Impeachment meant "to place in peach,  
Pushed into pulp to fill a breech".  
It doesn't. (Bet he'd like it though.)

And we who have survived the flu  
Without a call to 999  
Have got some stern research to do  
Regarding health claims made for wine.  
They say it perks the brain-cells up.  
How interesting: now where's my cup?

So it's official: in-flight food  
Is gastronomic guff from hell,  
Congealed, fibrous, leathery,  
Synthetic, overcooked as well.  
Does Egon Ronay tell the truth?  
Do Virgin trains run out of diesel?  
They do - like I run out of space.  
Now pop next door and read The Weasel.

## THE WEASEL

Having digested Proust, I tucked into a madeleine. The cake was most toothsome, but produced little in the way of time travel

JUST FOR once, I have completed my Christmas reading project. Usually this annual endeavour gets bogged down after the first chapter or so. *Bleak House* got no further than the foundations and I have scant hope of ever completing *Great Expectations*. But this year I pulled off the big one. I lapped up *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* in a single sitting. Of course (Weasel gives casual shrug), I read it in French. Somehow, even the finest translations miss the subtle nuances of Proust's masterpiece. OK, maybe I didn't read every word. However, I can say hand on heart that I looked at every single picture.

Sorry, didn't I mention that it was the new comic-strip version of *A la Recherche* (Delcourt, £10.95) that I breezed through? Though Stéphane Heuet's graphic adaptation prompted a few Gallic gripes (*Le Figaro* called it "catastrophic", "blasphemous" and "prodigiously insane"). It was well received by the French public, with the first edition of 12,000 copies selling out in three weeks. In the *London Review of Books*, the Proust scholar Michael Wood has praised the "moments of genuine lyricism" and "diligent textual fidelity" of Heuet's version. However, amid the prodigiously witty captions and bulbous speech bubbles, there appears to be one significant addition. No one in the original novel ever said "Tiens! une madeleine!"

This ejaculation emerges from the sad-eyed narrator, who bears a strong resemblance to Marcel P. himself. By

munching the bun, he is transported back to his childhood in the provincial town of Combray. In order to appreciate the magical properties of this confection, I prodded Mrs Weasel into baking a batch of madeleines. After I brushed aside her trifling objections (my next expense claim will include "one madeleine tin: £6.95"), madame set to work. An hour or so later, I was dunking a fragment of the shell-shaped sponge in a teaspoon of tea - the somewhat prissy technique adopted by the cartoon hero. Needless to say, nothing happened. The cake was most toothsome, but produced little in the way of time travel.

I am not alone in my desire to consume fiction's most illustrious item of pâtisserie. A recent feature in the *New Yorker* revealed that 2,000 madeleines per month are sold to Proust worshippers in Illiers-Combray, the author's home town near Chartres. (The community was merely Illiers until 1971, when its fictional counterpart was added by hyphenation.) However, Anne Borrel, the curator of the town's Proust Museum, holds the trenchant view that "the cult of the madeleine is a blasphemy". Crumb! Apparently, the great Marcel was not so obsessed by these cakes as most people think. In earlier drafts of his *magnum opus*, it appears that the role of the madeleine was taken by melba toast.

Of course, the truth is that we each have our own madeleine - a sensation that instantly whizzes us back across

the decades. In my case, it is the pungent scent of Kalamata olives. This is not because I had a sun-drenched childhood in the Peloponnese. Far from it. My early years were passed in the less-than-exotic location of the West Riding. However, the smell of Kalamata olives is exactly the same as the curing vats in the wire factory where my father worked. One whiff of



a Greek salad and I'm back there, aged nine.

A NATION rejoices at the news of the royal nuptials. I was particularly pleased to learn that Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones intend to continue with their day jobs after tying the knot. The reason is that I was a great fan of the recent TV documentary series presented by His Royal Highness and produced by his company,

which is somewhat inappropriately called *Arden*. Quite what the series was about, I can't recall. It might have been the Thames, it might have been royal palaces. Possibly both.

Anyway it was unusually uplifting viewing for late-night ITV. I'm sure that the decision to show such impeccably worthy material, reminiscent of the old "Look at Life" fillers which they used to show at the Odeon years ago, was completely unconnected with the royal association. I very much hope that a second, equally informative series will soon be commissioned from *Arden*. As a relaxing soporific, Prince Edward beats Horlicks hands down.

"I ARRIVE somewhere and head straight for market or the fish docks," writes my hero Rick Stein in his *Seafood Odyssey* (BBC, £18.99). As Mrs W knows to her cost, such a fragrant expedition is always my first move in foreign parts. Mr Stein began his new TV series among the fish stalls of Naples. Incited by the cameras, a local show-off chopped a chunk from a live octopus. "You can't do that!" Cornwall's culinary king expostulated. Quite right too. Brightest of all invertebrates, the octopus has an intelligence comparable to that of a dog. The Neapolitan goon might as well have bitten the paw of a puppy.

Mr Stein writes that "the main reason" for his trip to Naples was pasta puttanesca, my favourite of all pasta sauces. His version took all of 10 minutes and looked wonderful on TV. But

surely Mr Stein was excessively fastidious when he remarked that the English translation of this dish was too racy for home consumption. "Would anyone order prostitute sauce?" he mused. "I doubt it." Why on earth not? Lots of people have jam tarts.

MRS W is thrilled to bits with her new chandelier. Ordered with some difficulty from Habitat (there was a long waiting list), it consists of nine halogen bulbs, each equipped with a small plastic shade and supported by a long malleable wire. God knows how much it cost. (Mrs W hid the bill and that's always a bad sign.) Once in place, you tangle up the wires and that's it. I must say the result looks better than it sounds. However, since the light draws attention to the fact that our ceiling is in severe need of re-decoration, it has rarely been illuminated. This leads me to the view that we might just as well have erected a tangle of wire coat-hangers and achieved much the same effect.

This new source of illumination makes it impractical for me to adopt a lighting idea I came across in Whitby Museum over Christmas. It is an embalmed human hand cut from a hanged felon. It seems that the mitt was used as a holder for a candle prepared with fat rendered from the dead man's body. The "Hand of Glory" was supposed to put sleepers into a trance. "It was thus a useful piece of equipment for burglars," notes a fact sheet issued by the museum. I freely offer this exciting design concept to the young Turks of BBC-2's *Changing Rooms*.

## SPIRIT OF THE AGE

PAUL VALLELY

## 100 years without a drink

JUST THINK, if you were a teetotaler, how you feel this morning is as good as you can expect to feel all day. So goes the traditional apologetics of those who drink to excess and routinely put up with the liverish discomfort of the morning after the night before.

Of course, there is an alternative. You could give up drinking. Why? Well, as an act of self-denial. To set a good example to those who drink to excess. Or even as an act of reparation for the world's general intemperance.

This is not the kind of language, it must be said, designed to appeal to our modern hedonistic age. Even in this first full week of January - with the season of over-indulgence having drawn to its dyspeptic close, and the resolutions of improved lifestyle still weighing heavily upon us - there is something about the idea of permanent abstinence which seems out of tune with the times. And yet this month a body dedicated to such asceticism celebrates its 100th anniversary, as strong today as it was when it was launched in a very different milieu.

The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, which has half a million members around the world, will this month hold a service in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Southwark - followed by an alcohol-free dinner dance - to celebrate its 100th birthday.

What motivates such self-restraint? In order to find out I went along to have lunch with its president, Pat Hampton, a former postman who now makes his

living processing covenants for Cardinal Hume.

It was with some trepidation that I headed him the menu. Passing over the wine list in favour of mineral water had not proved that difficult, but there hardly seemed to be a dish on the menu that wasn't cooked in white wine, flavoured with madeira or marsala or flamed in brandy.

"Oh that's alright," he said as he scrutinised it. "We're allowed all that. The days of meat and two veg are long gone, and food is so much more adventurous. We just use our common sense. Indeed sherry trifle is a regular favourite at our dinner-dances."

There seemed something endearingly innocent about the trifle. The first Pioneer I had met had been an altogether more robust character. Some years ago I came across an old clock-maker called Tommy who coupled the no-drink commitment with a decidedly more macho career as an amateur boxing champion - skills which he combined in later life disciplining errant drunks in monastic alcohol rehabilitation programmes in his native Ireland.

But what all Pioneers have in common was adherence to three rules: to abstain from alcohol for life; to wear the organisation's lapel badge; and to say a daily prayer of dedication. For the motivation of the organisation is religious - its full title is the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart.

It's always seemed to me to be an odd object of devotion - the physical heart of Jesus. There's nothing in the bible about it, but medieval mystics hit upon the wounded heart, encircled by a crown of thorns and radiating light, as a symbol of Christ's love for the world. It's an even odder symbol for abstainers to adopt for, unlike other New Testament figures such as the teetotal John the Baptist, Jesus was a bit of a boozier. His critics even call him a drunkard in two of the gospels, and he certainly used wine as a key symbol at his last supper.

"We do not deny that wine is one of God's good gifts," said Pat as he tucked into something wine-free but irredeemably high-fat. "It's just that we have chosen to make a voluntary life-long sacrifice of it."

The idea of total abstinence grew out of the perceived failure of moderation to curb drunkenness - and the squalor and poverty that resulted from it - among the working classes in the 19th century. There was nothing new about the idea. In medieval times St Boniface banned alcohol in his monasteries; the English Puritans were not exactly big on booze; and the first temperance movements appeared in churches in the 18th century.

But the idea of moderation had initially appealed to post-Enlightenment man until the 19th century reformers decided it was ineffective. It was in 1852 that the moderation society in Preston, Lancashire, went total and - thanks to



Good Templars of the Temperance Society, c1900 Hulton Getty

the stammer of one of its leading lights - coined the term teetotal. Some 50 years later the Pioneers were formed in Dublin by a Jesuit priest.

You might imagine that it has been in decline since. But in fact its membership - at 500,000 (just half of them in Ireland) - has remained pretty constant, surprisingly so given the "if it feels good, do it" temper of our times where slimming is as near as most of us come to self-restraint. And slimming, of course, is an introverted self-absorbed activity whereas abstinence finds its focus outside the self. "I don't do this for me," says Pat. "It's my effort - through prayer and by example - on behalf of someone whom I might never know about."

In a church renowned for its

whiskey priests the Pioneers are not universally well received. "Some clergy seemed to think we were killjoys. We were seen as old-fashioned. But drugs have changed that among many." Saying no to drugs has been a key element in the movement's youth clubs, like the one Pat runs in Crickwood, London. "We get young people involved and let them see you can have a good time without drink. Many of them then never feel the need for it."

Around half the Pioneers have never touched a drop. The other half were people for whom alcohol was becoming a problem. "I liked it too much myself," admits Pat. "But I'm not anti-drink. I'm just saying that people have a choice - and I made it." And we can all drink to that.

## DAYS LIKE THESE

9 JANUARY 1965

RICHARD NIXON, politician (pictured), writes in his memoirs:

"After a small party to celebrate my 52nd birthday, I sat in my study to look back on the past year and look ahead into the future. I reflected on the fact that Winston Churchill had been in his mid-fifties when he lost his position of leadership in the House of Commons in 1939, and most of his contemporaries had then written him off as a political leader. But Churchill refused to write himself off. I took heart from the example of his refusal to give up... I wrote down some 'new year's resolutions for 1965': Set great goals; Daily rest; Brief vacations; Knowledge of all weaknesses; Better use of time; Begin writing book; Golf or some other kind of daily exercise; Articles or speeches on provocative new international and national issues.

I put down my yellow pad, turned out the light and stared into the fire"



10 JANUARY 1969

RICHARD BURTON, actor, notes in his journal:

"Elizabeth (Taylor, his wife) was astonishingly drunk even as I got to lunch. I don't recall her before being incoherent from drink. I expect it's from the drugs she's forced to take, not the booze. Christ, I hope she's all right. It would be frightful to live the rest of our lives in an alcoholic haze, seeing the world through fumes of spirits and cigarette smoke. never quite sure what you did or said the day before, what you read, whether wise or foolish, tardy or soon. God, I'm going to have a whisky and soda right now."

11 JANUARY 1942

IAN MORRISON, journalist, observes *Kuala Lumpur* noting the arrival of the Japanese:

"Civil authority had broken down. The European officials and residents had all evacuated. There was no progress in progress such as I have never seen before. Most of the big department stores had already been whistled clean. There was now a general sack of all shops and premises. The streets were knee-deep in boxes and cardboard cartons and paper.

Looters could be seen carrying every imaginable prize away with them. Here was one man with a Singer sewing-machine over his shoulder, there a Chinese with a long roll of linoleum tied to the back of his bicycle, here two Tamils with a great sack of rice suspended from a pole, there a young Tamil struggling with a great box of the best Norwegian sardines."

IAN IRVINE

## America's leaders have failed

CLASSIC  
PODIUM

From a speech by Richard Nixon accepting the Republican nomination for the presidential election of 1968 with a call for 'honest government' (8 AUGUST 1968)

destiny, and let us begin by committing ourselves to the truth to see it like it is and tell it like it is, to find the truth, to speak the truth and to live the truth. That's what we will do.

We've had enough of big promises and little action. The time has come for an honest government in the United States of America.

My fellow Americans, I believe that

historians will recall that 1968 marked the beginning of the American generation in world history. Just to be alive in America, just to be alive at this time, is an experience unparalleled in history.

Think: 32 years from now most Americans living today will celebrate a New Year that comes once in a thousand years. And by our decision in this year, we - all of us here, all of you listening on television and radio - we will determine what kind of nation America will be. We will determine what kind of a world America will live in in the year 2000.

Tonight, I see the face of a child. He lives in a great city, he's black or he's white, he's Mexican, Italian, Polish, none of that matters. What matters: he's an American child.

That child in that great city is more important than any politician's promise. He is America, he is a poet, he is a scientist, he's a great teacher, he's a proud craftsman, he's everything we've ever hoped to be in everything we dare to dream about.

He sleeps the sleep of a child, and he dreams the dreams of a child. And yet when he awakens, he awakens to a living nightmare of poverty, neglect and despair.

He fails in school, he ends up on welfare. For him the American system is one that feeds his stomach and starves his soul. It breaks his heart.

And in the end it may take his life

on some distant battlefield. To millions of children in this rich land this is their prospect - but this is only a part of what I see in America.

I see another child tonight. He hears a train go by. At night he dreams of faraway places where he'd like to go. It seems like an impossible dream. But he is helped on his journey through life. A father who had to go to work before he finished the sixth grade sacrificed everything he had so that his sons could go to college.

A gentle Quaker mother with a passionate concern for peace quietly wept when he went to war but she understood why he had to go.

A great teacher, a remarkable football coach, an inspirational minister encouraged him on his way. A courageous wife and loyal children stood by him in victory and also in defeat. And in his chosen profession of politics, first there were scores, then hundreds and then thousands and finally millions who worked for his success.

And tonight he stands before you, nominated for President of the United States of America. You can see why I believe so deeply in the American dream. For most of us the American revolution has been won, the American dream has come true.

What I ask of you tonight is to help me make that dream come true for millions to whom it's an impossible dream today.



THE SATURDAY ESSAY

# Our desire to conform is crushing the human spirit



KENNETH MINOGUE

*The attack on individualism amounts to a project for closing down the innovative vitality of the modern world*

INDIVIDUALISM IS a 19th century word for a 16th century phenomenon: the practice of living in terms of coherent desires under the rule of law, rather than within the graduated rankings Europeans inherited from the middle ages. Individualism unleashed, for better or for worse, everything that makes the modern West dynamic and innovative. It has also created a moral universalism never before seen. Responsible and compassionate about the evils of the world, individualists have seldom been able to free themselves from the taint of selfishness and egotism. The slide from social description to pejorative moral judgement takes place in the blink of an eye.

This collapse into condemnation happens because the vocabulary of individualism sounds harsh to ears becoming accustomed to the competing moral attitudes found in such terms as "co-operation", "teamwork" and, especially, "community", a term which seldom occurs without a great outpouring of license. At its most gross, contemporary rhetoric identifies individualism with a stereotype of self-interested rational choice, thought to flourish only in capitalism, alias the economy. To engage in endeavours that, even indirectly, make one better off than one's neighbour is often, in a reprise of Bolshevik sentiment, interpreted as the moral fault of greed.

These attitudes constitute a semantic atmosphere that emerged in the 1980s, along with political correctness, as a vehicle for hostility to libertarian justifications of the public policies pursued by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. This hostility has led almost to a collapse of morality itself. Instead of bold assertions of right and wrong, which can be argued about, we have a sociality in which the wrong is described by using evasive relational terms such as "anti-social" or "unacceptable".

One of the many oddities of this new understanding should be immediately evident. It is the relation between individualism and successful co-operation. Individualists have throughout the modern period exhibited a capacity for intelligent joint action which far exceeds that of more communally organised civilisations. This capacity to respond imaginatively to changing situations is what explains the military and industrial superiority of Western cultures. Yet the communitarian attack on individualism takes the form of arguing that individualists are alienated atoms too selfish to be able to work together. The implication is that effectiveness requires conforming to what the community (alias the state) requires of us. This implication tells us a great deal about the politics of this rising morality.

It is this political question which has in our time given a special bite to the question of social reality. Is the thing we call "society" simply the outcome of the doings of the individuals composing it, or is it something like a Platonic form in which we all, in slightly different ways, participate? At every step in the response to such questions, partisans have their ears cocked in search of rhetorical advantage. For if society does, in fact, involve some common element "above" each individual, then the only way to improve the world is by operating through collectivist policies, and the only candidate for the role of agent of this collective is the state. That is why it has been argued (for example by Karl Popper) that methodological collectivism has political implications, indeed perhaps



An early morning crowd of commuters flows over London Bridge, the ultimate image of our 'ant-like' existence

Peter MacDiarmid

even leads directly to totalitarianism. If such a thing as Herbert Spencer referred to as a "social sensorium" is real, then society is a single collective feeling and there may well be a case for consciously directing it.

Marx was, of course, one of the main foes of individualism and deplored even postulating such a thing as "society" against the individual, remarking that "the particular individual is only a particular species being and as such mortal." The reality of the individual is thus for Marx nothing else but his immersion in society. Some version of this view has been the immemorial belief of mankind.

Individualism – as the beliefs associated with the exploration of human individuality – challenged this belief and it is in fact what distinguishes the modern Western world from other civilisations. It is the thing that the historian Burckhardt observed Italy "swarming with" in the Renaissance, and during the Reformation it surged into the sphere of religion, and not merely among Protestants. The political philosophy of Hobbes in his *Leviathan* of 1651 replaced the medieval idea of graduated society by a conception of individuals each pursuing his (and rather later her) own good under laws made by a sovereign power. The French were especially fertile in exploring the psychology of this new creature, who typically appeared in theory as an egotist. Radical critics of individualism often condemned it by contrast with nostalgic ideas of the patriotic virtues of the classical republics and thus interpreted individualism as a symptom of moral corruption.

Some saw the modern world as an arena of alienated and miserable people who were crying out for an enlightenment that would bring order and happiness. Yet individualism not only survived but proved capable of defending itself. Some defences were defiantly paradoxical, such as Mandeville's view that it was precisely the vices of these selfish individuals which made them so prosperous.

Mammon was thus one of the presiding deities of individualism, and it rapidly commercialised society. The growth of the market was something despised by many groups, ranging from poets to aristocrats. Yet Adam Smith and later writers argued that it was the basis of more peaceful and polished manners. With the industrial revolution, increasing numbers migrated

from the countryside to the towns, where the individual had long composed a new class of person, soon to be much hated, called the middle class, or the "bourgeoisie". Quite how the vast improvements in human possibility created by this new civilisation came to be so extensively rejected, often by those who had most benefited, is a complicated story, but there is little doubt that the attack on individualism amounts to a project for closing down the innovative vitality of the modern world.

It is as a moral theory that individualism is currently most neglected. Individualist moral theory is a rejection of the Platonic idea that the moral life is an athletic struggle in which reason is forever at work subduing disorderly passions. Virtue platonically understood turns out to be fitting into a pattern, and individualism, in Platonic theory no less than in the case of traditional civilisation, only be the problem constituted by deviance, eccentricity and waywardness. The only real virtue in traditional thought is fitting in. Not to fit in is merely irrational. A common derivation from this line of thought is the idea that the state has the responsibility for articulating and enforcing whatever is thought to be the rational pattern of life.

Individuality is, of course, only one among the possible bases for a social order. It is, in a sense, something that a culture imposes upon the people who share it, and while it has now spread remarkably it is a unique civilisation creation. The modern West has been a daring adventure in human evolution because a situation in which individuals have the discretion to act on their own judgements seems to be the problem rather than the solution to social order. And it is certainly true that a society constituted in this way requires a strong element of internalisation of the rules that make it possible.

This was how the modern Western world rejected castes, social hierarchies and even automatic respect for elders. It was a remarkable adventure, requiring a great deal of nerve and forever conducted amid the walling of those who believed, and still believe, that unless we conformed to some ideal pattern of a good society we should inevitably come to grief.

And yet it survived. Nervous passengers caught up in this adventure were forever holding their hands over their eyes as they discerned shipwreck ahead, but eventually

the very term "crisis" became a bit of a joke because the ship sailed, not without turbulence but certainly without shipwreck, through so many of them. Economic depressions, revolutions, moral collapse and war – somehow individualist cultures emerged with renewed energy every time. The difficult thing to explain is why these successes seemed merely to feed the appetite for building the perfect society, which, in being necessarily static, would equally necessarily amount to the suppression of the individual.

The reason is, one may suggest, that modern European states have, along with their achievements, also been arenas of spectacular conflict. Further, with advancing technology these conflicts have become immensely destructive. Yet the very technological capacity that causes despair also feeds the hope that our so remarkable civilisation can "construct" a society of perfect harmony.

Individualism has thus become the victim of its own triumphs, and the way in which this has happened is an object lesson in the way in which moral ideas are subverted in our time. The essential precept of individualism as a morality is the belief in responsible choice. Whereas in other civilisations most people find themselves under the tutelage of others, the modern individualist was left to do his prudence for himself. Success and failure are important, but in Christian belief the world to come can be called in to correct the inevitably imperfect outcomes of human life. But such individual moral responsibility, with failure as the risk, was a remarkably bracing discipline.

In advanced modern democratic societies, however, the sufferings of imprudent people become public issues attracting understandable sympathy. The poor and the imprudent both lack the means for medical care or welfare in old age. The state steps in and makes at least some sort of basic provision and obviates much avoidable suffering. Admirable, no doubt, but it quite changes the terms of human life. The self-control that a prudent virtue requires is undermined when the prudent end up no better off than the imprudent.

At the same time, the idea of individualism is vulgarised by removing the condition of responsibility. Freedom is left signifying nothing more than having a pleasurable set of options to choose from. Life becomes a supermarket of experience,

imagined to be costless, and everyone must have a right to them all. But the moment the idea of responsibility is detached from the idea of choosing, then we begin to create a world in which mere impulse rules.

There is no doubt that such a world is morally shallow. What is perhaps less evident is that it also transforms the political world. The individualist acts and takes the consequences. The impulsivist acts, and is saved from his folly by the welfare state. This looks like a great human advance – happiness on the cheap, as it were. But like most substitutes for virtue, it has hidden costs. Someone has to do the prudence, supply the responsibility and the ordering of social life. This task falls, of course, to government, which increasingly becomes our master – or, to use the Greek word, despot.

Modern politics thus exhibits a fascinating cycle which begins with the enactment of some new right or liberation – the right to a pension, for example, or medical services free at the point of need – a liberation, perhaps, which rejects inherited sexual restraints.

However, in a generation or so, individual vices turn into social problems, and the government steps in. Caring about old age, which in the 19th century led most people, even those who were very poor, to make some provision for themselves, becomes a legislated duty. Governments now compel what was once a virtue. Free medical care leads to government control over diet and lifestyle. Sexual liberation is more recent, but the emergence of governmentally enforced puritanism is already on the horizon.

The term individualism has itself become one element of this advancing repression. Because its meaning has been corrupted, it can more easily be denigrated. Instead of the real thoughtful individualism on which modern civilisation was built, it now refers to the impulsive and irresponsible satisfaction of desires. And this corrupt sense of individualism is coming to be partnered by an equally corrupt sense of community – as fitting in with a single pattern of life over which government presides in greater and greater detail.

The writer is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. This article has been adapted by the writer from a review in this week's *Times Literary Supplement*

BAROMETER

SEAN O'GRADY

Senator of the week

US Senator Strom Thurmond, who this week swore in Judge Rehnquist to preside over the Clinton trial. He is 96 years of age and, thus, the nearest thing America has to our own Queen Mother. He also has a fancy title, "President Pro-Tempore", which means he is the longest-serving senator, having been first elected in 1948. His flesh is still willing and a number of incidents testify to the enduring strength of his spirit. Only last year he challenged rival senator John Glenn's right to go aboard the space shuttle. "I always believed that if NASA really wanted to study the effect of space travel on older Americans they should have called me". Glenn is only 77, after all.

When Strom was just 94 he faced accusations that he had fondled a woman senator in a lift. Senator Patty Murray, less than half his age at 46 and self-described as a "mom in tennis shoes", said that the older man put his arm round her while he tried to grope her breast and asked in his southern drawl: "Are you married, little lady?". Ideally qualified, then, to act as a juror in the Clinton trial.



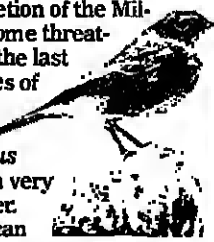
Tribute of the week

"We shall not see his like again" wrote Paul Routledge in *The Mirror* this week of Gordon Brown's (soon to be ex-) spin doctor Charles Whelan. "Stash him in the press bar in the Commons, where he is a tireless spinner for Labour, and he works till he drops." There are many witnesses to the intense work that Paul and indeed Charles would do in that establishment until they, the room, or both, stopped spinning.



Bird of the week

The completion of the Millennium Dome threatens one of the last nesting sites of the black redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, a very rare breeder. Still, what can we expect from the man now in charge, a Lord Falconer?



Lookalike of the week

Has Peter Mandelson ever been a male model? One wonders. Note the remarkable resemblance between this one of the Britannia Building Society's "Wallace and Gromit" style advert characters, and their most famous mortgage customer.

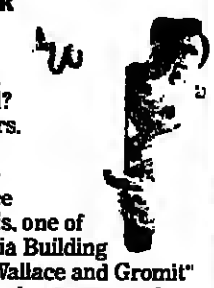


Image of the week

This is the Canon Picture of the Year, taken by Mike Maloney, who works for the *Sunday People*. It is, in fact, a "remake" of a famous shot by American legend Elliott Erwitt. No matter, though. Every dog has its day, as Strom Thurmond might say.



COLD CALL

JACK O'SULLIVAN RINGS THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH

But it's not a bad slab, I say. "Does your family have any guilty secrets from the Clearances?" "No," he says, "because we took the reverse attitude down here in the Borders. We created a village, Newcastleton, to provide a base for people so that they could stay in the countryside instead of being drawn overseas and into the cities."

But he must agree, mustn't he, that the Scottish aristocracy are not a popular lot? "I don't know what you mean by the Scottish aristocracy," he says. "We're no different from anyone else. We don't have different coloured hair."

Hasn't he seen *Braveheart*, with its tale of Scottish aristocratic betrayal? "I must be the only person in Scotland who hasn't," he laughs. "I'm afraid the cinema is rather a long way from here. But I'd be delighted if someone would send me

a video of it." I offer my pirate copy and he gives me his address, spelling out Drumlaurig.

Maybe he would be stirred to claim that King of the Scots title? "Certainly not," says the duke. "I would have no more interest in it than you would have in being King of the Irish." A step up from racing correspondent, I think to myself.

Anyway, what about Labour's plans? "Actually, I looked at them and concluded that they will not affect us. They are designed for exceptionally bad landowners, for whom one really has no sympathy." Nor does the duke mind plans to extend access to private land. "People have been free to walk all over our estates for the last 100 years or more."

Everybody except the duke, that is. For over 20 years, since breaking his back in a riding accident, he has been confined to a wheelchair. Would he swap his lands for legs? "No, I wouldn't. It's not mine to do so. I'm merely a link in a long chain of people who have acquired all of this land by perfectly honourable means. In any case, I'm 75 now and don't have long to go."

Does Britain's largest landlord think he will get to heaven? "If I can get into the House of Commons," laughs this former Conservative MP confidently, "then I can get into heaven. I found enough people to vote me in four times. Did you know that Robin Cook challenged me in 1970? I defeated him comfortably."



Britain's biggest landlord

WALTER FRANCIS John Montague Douglas Scott, the septuagenarian ninth Duke of Buccleuch, is the country's largest landowner, with vast estates in Scotland. His acreage is bigger even than the Queen's. He is also tipped as a possible future King of the Scots. Is he miffed, I am wondering, by the Government's new plans to buy up badly managed Scottish estates?

The phone at Drumlaurig, his vast fairy-tale castle in Dumfriesshire, is engaged. Apparently, there is only one. Finally, I get through.

"Your Grace," I say, verbally tugging the forelock as I announce myself. "You sound like a racing correspondent," laughs a friendly

English voice that is a cross between Kenneth More and Tony Benn. "Well, you don't sound very Scottish to me," I reply, laughing back.

Is he really Scottish? "Of course. There are lots of people who don't have Scottish accents who are Scots. Being Scottish is about the air one breathes. It's the stuff one is made of. If one has walked the countryside as a child and trampled through the mud, one feels close to this land."

Ah, the land. And how much of it does he in fact own? "Just over 400 square miles," he replies as unpompously as possible. That's a small country, I say. "Yes, but 96 per cent of it is windswept hills, defined by the European Union as severely disadvantaged."



A wok'n'roll hero is something to be



**Barry Cox, a Chinese man trapped inside a Liverpoolliar's body, at home in the city's Chinatown**

**Martin Rickett**

"No, definitely not. I like being English. I want to make my own style. It's completely new to combine the two. That's what makes me feel so special."

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صبراً عن الأهل



Emma Cook  
to be

# Do ya think I'm sixty?

Rachel Hunter's decision to leave her husband Rod Stewart in order to 'find herself' is another poignant reminder of the plight of the ageing rock star. By David Thomas

It's a tough life being an ageing rock megastar. One minute you're trolling round the stadia of America and Britain, singing "Do ya think I'm sexy?" Theo the next, your wife replies with, "Well, no I don't, now you come to mention it," and heads off to "find herself" without you.

And so it was that Rachel Hunter walked out on Rod Stewart, an event so momentous that it was announced on Radio 4's *Today* programme, right up there with the crisis in Sierra Leone and the latest disasters in Kosovo. Some might see this as another example of the BBC's infamous dumbing-down, a pathetic attempt to be trendy and demotic, like the church's equation of Jesus Christ and Che Guevara. But that would be to misunderstand the deeper significance of Rod's tragic love-split.

Here is a man who, barely three years ago, was getting togged up in a cream satin frock-coat to re-pledge his troth to his wife (in wedding dress and fur-trimmed cloak), while *Hello!* magazine observed: "Their children, family and friends gather to witness the singer and his wife repeat their wedding vows in a romantic winter ceremony."

Just last August, he was telling *Q* magazine that "Rachel's a great woman. I can't find any fault with her." He boasted that, "I'm still very rampant, very horny all the time." And if the sex and rock 'n' roll were still in working order, so were the drugs. "I haven't stopped drinking, because she likes drinking too. She

*These men may be ludicrously rich, but their tastes and inclinations were formed almost half a century ago*

lets me do a little bit of substance. I never carry it, but if someone's got some I'll have a little line, and that will be the end of it."

You couldn't have hoped to find a happier rock hubby. But if Rod was contented, Rachel was not. Unattributed "friends" have told the tabloids that the Kiwi cutie was bored by her husband's lifestyle. When not working, he liked to sit around the house, tinkering with his train-set or watching the TV. From time to time, he'd get the lads round to kick a ball about the 118x84 yard football pitch he'd had specially-built at his Essex mansion, or take his Californian ex-pat pals off on football tours of the States. Trips to the pub would be spent "telling old war-stories and boozing" with his mates.

No wonder his pretty young bride felt dissatisfied, yearned to break free, longed for a world in which one could talk about something other than Scotland's World Cup campaigns, 1974-86. And here we get to the nub of it, the skull beneath the media skin. For the parting of the 54-year-old warbler and his 30-year-old spouse is not only a salutary warning to all rich middle-aged men contemplating the acquisition of a trophy wife, but also an elegiac reflection of passing time, worthy of deeper contemplation.

Rod is typical of an entire generation of rockers whose reputations were founded on youthful hedonism, but whose every instinct now cries out for a calmer life of carpet slippers and quiet nights in.

These are groovers who'd rather be geezers. They may have ludicrous amounts of money (Stewart's own fortune is estimated at between £50-60m; he last year received £9.2m for the rights to his next 12 years of publishing income), but



Rachel Hunter and Rod Stewart; she'd prefer 'a groover rather than an old geezer'

their tastes and inclinations were formed almost half a century ago, in very different conditions to the ones they now inhabit.

Rod's friend and former band member Ronnie Wood, for example, will happily spend an afternoon in a Dublin pub, drinking Guinness, chatting about his dogs and his horses and the blues band he plays in with his brothers Art and Ted, both of whom are in their sixties. Ron would rather away all night, except that the missus tends to drag him back home, whereupon he trots off behind her like a penitent Afghan hound.

Similarly, Ron's current musical partner, Keith Richards, reminisces about the days of rationing, National Service, and a boyhood spent playing around old bomb-sites and gun-emplacements. When the last Stones tour ended, he wound down at his home in West Wittering, down on the Sussex retirement coast. "God's little acre," he calls it. Keith's a familiar figure in the Wittering pubs. He gave £30,000 to the village hall appeal. The locals love him.

Men like that should be settling down with sensible women, of their own age, who are happy to get on with their own interests - gardening, say, or charity work - while their



Mick, Ronnie and Keith: 'their instincts cry out for carpet slippers and quiet nights in'

partners play at being rock stars, or chunter with their chums in the pub. But a rock star's career depends on the illusion, however faded, of youthful vigour. His image, as well as his ego, demands a constant supply of fresh young flesh.

And so we have the tragic sight of Mick Jagger - a natural Tory, an expert on antiques, loves to spend a day at the cricket - getting him-



self caught up in a pathetic paternity case because he simply couldn't say no to a quickie with a Brazilian bimbo. So, too, the end of Rod Stewart's marriage will surely be followed by a binge of blonde models that will be as embarrassing for us to behold as it will be dissatisfying for him.

Rod knows this. Before he met Rachel Hunter, he was "flying birds in from everywhere and shag-



ging them - I was so unhappy". He is condemned to repeat this torment again. And yet, all the while, he will be longing for the days when he could play with his mates and then come home to the missus. Thus it is that the rake's progress comes, as always, to a miserable end. Pity poor Rodney. His situation is, by any definition, tragic.



Sue Mattocks: keen to get back to normality John Cobb

## When I walk in they all clap

### MY WEEK

FIVE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF SUE MATTOCKS, 42, HEAD OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT CLARENDON HOUSE GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL WHO THIS WEEK RETURNED TO WORK. SHE WAS AMONG 16 WESTERN TOURISTS KIDNAPPED BY TERRORISTS IN THE YEMEN LAST WEEK

**Sunday**  
Wake up at around 8am, relieved to be back home. I go out to buy the newspapers to find out why this had happened and who those people were. At 11am a reporter and a photographer from a tabloid arrive to do an interview. Later I get on the scales and I discover I have lost three-quarters of a stone, most of it through fear and adrenaline. I am very shocked to have lost so much weight as I thought I had been eating normally.

**Monday**  
I read my interview in *The Mirror*, worried that they would sentimentalise the issue, but it was OK. I didn't like getting my photo taken, as I'm not Cindy Crawford, but fortunately I look all right. *This Morning* want me to go on the programme. I talk to my headteacher, as I am concerned about the publicity for the school. Jane Bennett tells me that I should do the interview: "It's only going to happen to you once."

I am keen to get back, as I want some normality and I want to see people. The head says, "by all means come in, and see how you go". There is no pressure on me; the school is wonderful. I phone the hospital where Margaret Thompson is and leave a message to send my love. I travelled with a really good group of people in Yemen. We went through such a lot. I'm sure we'll be in touch. But I think we all need some space at the moment.

**Tuesday**  
At the television studios I am not nervous, because teachers are used to performing, standing up in front of classes and sometimes making idiots of themselves. The make-up girl says, "You're a good colour", and I think, well, I have just been held hostage, standing up in the sun for hours. I am then asked to look at some video footage of Yemen to see

whether it will be appropriate. It isn't unpleasant or horrible. I recognise the architecture and the landscapes.

**Wednesday**  
Get up just after 6am and go into school. I teach religious studies and have a GCSE class in the morning. When I walk in all the children clap. They have also bought me a box of chocolates.

I take assembly in the hall at 9am. I say: "I am happy to be back, but you must remember that people have died. Can we sit quietly for a few moments to remember the families?" I nearly cry at this point. I am feeling really wound up.

In the evening I decide that what I want to do is write a detailed account of the abduction. It takes about four hours. I have typed 10 pages and it is midnight when I go to bed. Writing it isn't traumatic but I want to get the sequence of events right. I am not entirely sure what I want to do with it, but I am glad to have got it all down.

**Thursday**  
At school I make a couple of photocopies of my account and put them on the general staff noticeboard. During the day Dawn Ball, head of maths, takes it down and photocopies it 20 times, asking me why I didn't copy it for everyone. I thought people would ask a few questions; I didn't think they would want a blow-by-blow account. I am very touched. At lunch time I go to my doctor. I have suffered no physical injury but want to be sure I'm OK. I ask the practice nurse to take my blood pressure. She laughs, because it's lower than when I last had it checked. I thought it would have gone through the roof.

I have a lesson in the afternoon with my A-level group. We're quite close, and some come up to give me a hug. It's very touching.

DAISY PRICE

## My sons knock chips off the old bloke

"COME ON Dad," the boys urged as I puffed and struggled in their wake. I pumped my elbows, pushed as hard as I could with each foot, but try as I might I couldn't persuade the wheels in my rollerblades to spin fast enough to catch them.

I thought no more of it until we were sitting down to lunch and I happened to mention that I couldn't keep up with the boys. Tom, who despises all sports anyway, was merciless. "Dad's never been able to keep up with me, because he's a wimp," he pronounced. Then he really dug the knife in. "And he's old - he's just a sad old man."

Steady on, Tom, I thought but didn't say, this is a tricky moment for me. For the first time I have been

soundly defeated by my own sons in a physical contest: what I need is a bit of understanding, a little sympathy. This, I recognised, was an important rite of passage for me - and it signified the start of the return journey. Up to now, each rite has been a marker on the voyage upwards towards maturity: first day at school, first night away from home, first girlfriend, first job, first child and so on.

There I was, until a week or two ago, cruising along in the back straight, thinking I was in the very prime of life, only to discover that I had reached a turning point - and it is all downhill from here. Soon enough, the boys will be beating me at any sport they choose; they'll have

to "take it easy" when we go for a walk, to avoid tiring me out; they'll offer to carry my bag, and help out with heavy jobs around the house, or drive me to the doctor for a check-up...

Of course I knew it would come to this, eventually. But I was not ready yet, not for a good few years. After all, Darcy still hasn't turned eight - and he's a skin-and-bone strip of a boy with great knobby knees and the diet of a supermodel supplemented by as many sweets as he can get his hands on. I am a grown man. I eat healthily, exercise thoroughly, and was banking on keeping him in his place at least until he was a hulking teenager.

Sensible people, starting with

my wife, might suggest that it was foolish of me to pit myself against my sons in physical competition, that it was misleading, even dangerous

### PARK LIFE



BRUCE MILLAR

for me to link their respect for me with physical dominance, and that the dent in my male ego was just what I deserved. All this may be so, but the instinct for physical competition is embedded deep in the male psyche. Surely it is better to compete openly and laugh at it than to keep it secret and serious - and much more malign.

The only absolutely vivid memory I have of what I am sure was an otherwise enjoyable family holiday when I was Darcy's age is of spending summer afternoons engaged in long-jump contests with my father (it must have been an Olympic year). I can't remember who won - the result was not important - but I can close my eyes and summon the

competition at a moment's notice. I also have, from the same era, a terrible and guilty memory of losing my temper with my father, who laughed at me so much in the wrestle that followed that he lost his balance and I was able to knock him off his feet. I hated this victory more than the humiliation that preceded it, because it upset what I instinctively knew to be the natural order of things.

Perhaps this was the mirror image of what I felt when beaten on rollerblades by Darcy. Whatever, I took the boys out blading again a few days later, this time to a broad, open space where I could devise a course more suited to my lumbering style than the tight turns where Darcy had left me standing. We raced round this

wide circuit in the gloom of a winter's afternoon, and I managed - just - to keep ahead of Darcy, although I was still far behind Tom.

This was only a short-term solution. Clearly I'm going to have to get used to the new status quo. But not for a while. From now on, I'll only challenge the boys at sports that were already invented when I was young, such as tennis or football, because I have the edge that 30 years of practice brings, or sports such as distance running or swimming that require stamina, which improves with age (up to a point). But I know that I've got my work cut out, keeping fit enough to compete in the years ahead. I'm not ready to cede my position just yet, boys.

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# Petra Tegetmeier

FOR HER father, Eric Gill, she was the perfect adolescent muse. For her one-time fiancé David Jones, she was the only sister he could comfortably paint in front of.

Her father's wood-engravings catch her in the bath-tub, combing her hair, shy, demure and never meeting his eye. Jones's swirling lines of pencil and watercolour depict a brooding earth goddess, sometimes stern, sometimes brimming with sensual energy. Always with a glance that suggested, "I know your sort."

The real Petra Tegetmeier (née Gill) was far more vital and ebullient than the male gaze ever gave her credit for. When Gill's wife was carrying the unborn Petra, their second child, she first felt the baby's flickering movements on a trip to Rome. Eric Gill, not yet a Catholic, was absorbed by the inscriptions on the Trajan column, but years later, when his daughters made a pilgrimage to Rome, he attached poetic significance to this "quickening" in the holy city.

The family converted to Catholicism in 1913 when Petra was seven years old. Their home was on Ditchling Common, Sussex, in close proximity to the craft workshops where Gill made his sculptures and ran his lettering workshop. Women bore the brunt of domestic work here, in archaic conditions with no running water or electricity. The printer Hilary Pepler and his young family lived nearby; Pepler ran St Dominic's Press and like Gill he longed to reinvent society along rural, non-industrial lines. Self-sufficiency was applauded, health visitors and any invasion into one's domestic life by government bodies were viewed with scorn.

The calligrapher Edward Johnston lived in Ditchling village, and worked on projects with Gill, but as his family was not Catholic the children's lives were not so intertwined. The sensitive Petra remembered Johnston's daughters hiding upstairs when she visited the household: "I don't think our faith was the problem so much as their laughter at our hand-made clothes."

Petra and her sisters, Betty and

Joan, were home-schooled: erratic teaching from their busy father, other artists and craftsmen from the community, and the occasional well-meaning outsider, sympathetic to their cause. One such teacher insisted on keeping her pet dog in the impromptu classroom and it barked all through maths. The girls all produced beautiful art work: both stylised Christian imagery after their father, and, when left to their own devices, plump mothers pushing prams. There was sometimes a yearning for the more ordinary side

David Jones depicted her as a brooding earth goddess – always with a glance that suggested, 'I know your sort'

of life to be recognised. When Eric Gill carved a wooden doll for Petra with a solemn expression and pig-tails she couldn't help wishing that it had fair skin and curls.

In her mid-teens Petra "walked out" with Pepler's son Stephen. Once they did not return from the South Downs until dusk and a search party was sent. Stephen became a Dominican Friar and distinguished theological writer. Father Conrad Pepler, Gill's wood-engravings of Petra, *Girl in the Bath*, *Hair Combing* and *The Plait* (1922-23), along with a small stone sculpture of her which now graces the book jacket of Judith Collins's 1998 catalogue raisonné of Gill's sculpture, all captured Petra's teenage magic, but did not cage it.

At 16 she escaped her patriarchal territory to train locally as a weaver with the tenacious and inspiring

Ethel Mairet. Mairet was a pioneer in the revival of hand-weaving in Britain. Petra used to giggle at the memory of her own hopeless arithmetic when it came to measuring or adding percentages. She would also poke fun at the "superior" visitors to Mairet's workshop who refused to believe that she was weaving with silk because it did not have a shiny artificial finish. Petra was forever fascinated by the texture and detail of handmade cloth.

In 1923 Petra became engaged to the artist and poet David Jones, who was working with her father at Ditchling. Their betrothal was blessed in the chapel on the common and their relationship was intimate – Jones's painting *The Garden Enclosed* (1924), now in the Tate, records a kiss amongst the geese with Gill's carved wooden doll discarded on the path beside them. When Petra broke off the engagement, fearing that Jones did not in reality favour the family life she yearned for, Jones was devastated, but they remained lifelong friends.

Petra then became engaged to the engraver, letterer, cartoonist and former Trappist monk Denis Tegetmeier. They married in 1930. She wore her own wedding dress, and the Penelope within ensured that this was a piece of weaving that she did not unpick. They had a long and happy marriage lasting until his death in 1987.

Petra loved children. Her own four daughters and two sons grew up in Eric Gill's last home, Pigotts. Their parents encouraged their interest in craft and the visual arts – Charlotte went on to found the wonderfully resourceful toyshop and mail-order catalogue "Fridas", William is a Thatcher, Adam a photographer, Judith paints and both Prudence and Petra's niece Helen Davies spin and weave.

Well into her eighties, Petra lived alone in a converted weaver's Chapel in Avoncliff, near Bradford-upon-Avon, with several of her children as near neighbours. There were thistles winding out from pots



The Plait, by Eric Gill: a 1922 portrait of his daughter Petra

on the floor and obscuring the television screen, books crowding the shelves and flowered wrap-around aprons hanging on the kitchen door. When a stroke forced her to move into a nursing home, she made sure her interior was recreated as far as was possible, and she took tapestry work and her spinning wheel with her.

Petra Tegetmeier had long been idolised by men for her calmness and serenity but she was in many ways a woman's woman. She was most at home in the company of women, eating cake on the bench in her garden, thriving on anecdotes and laughing at some plastic "Transformer" toy vehicle which a grandchild had left in the shrubbery. She could also make art dealers squirm in their shoes just by pursuing her lips.

When Fiona MacCarthy's biography Eric Gill (1989) revealed, from the evidence of Gill's diaries, his sex-

ual relations with his two eldest daughters Petra remained unflappable in the face of media fire. She made it clear that her own attitude to sex had not been harmed. The sisters had never been made to feel shame.

In another era I could imagine Petra having a second career as a child therapist. She had an intuitive grasp of human dilemmas and could convey comfort and affection without the need for many words. She was devoid of condescension, brilliantly combined self-mockery with a subtle self-assurance, and was, without a doubt, one of the most knowing people I have ever met.

LOTTIE HOARE

Petra Helen Gill, weaver: born London 18 August 1906; married 1930 Denis Tegetmeier (died 1987); two sons, four daughters; died Limpley Stoke, Wiltshire 1 January 1999.

# George Steedman

GEORGE STEEDMAN was one of the most remarkable characters ever to find a niche in the BBC, doing far more than most to make its reputation resound so splendidly around the world.

Soon after the Second World War he was responsible for the creation of the BBC's European Service. The Continent – then starved of information and intellectual sustenance – presented a unique broadcasting opportunity. Steedman took on the challenge. The news service was to be a sort of Third Programme aimed at an important audience of so-called "opinion-formers". Intellectual probity and freedom of expression – a freedom which the home-based services were never quite able to achieve – were the watchwords.

Of course it was highly educative. George Steedman was always a teacher. Both his parents were teachers, his wife Nan, also a teacher, was the daughter of his old headmaster. Steedman did his teaching via a microphone, but he also taught his own broadcasters how to broadcast, on the basis of talking one to one, to be an invited guest in someone else's sitting room. He was a Yorkshireman born and bred but quite unlike the sturdy salt-of-the-earth Yorkshire stereotype. Perhaps Emily Brontë got it right – he was prickly, difficult, temperamental.

He won a scholarship to Cambridge, reading English and gaining a First at Selwyn College. His college was then known as a training ground for young clergymen, something Steedman resented. This was one of his silly resentments, like being born in 1916, doomed from the outset. War indeed came before there was any opportunity of establishing himself in a career. He went into the Field Security Police, a sort of Intelligence unit, and was badly wounded. Recovering, his educative bent reasserted itself with a period in the Forces Education Services. It was an easy step to the BBC.

The European Service was situated in Bush House, a far more promising place to be in than Broadcasting House. It was within walking distance of Parliament, theatres, galleries, university colleges including the London School of Economics, Fleet Street, which then held every journalist of note. Bush House itself was full of a dazzling mix of continental refugees, Russian, French, German, Italian, a hub of post-war intellectual excitement.

The European Service under Steedman's guidance lived up to this. Every subject was covered at its highest level and best. He was the first to employ a full-time science correspondent, a subject only just beginning in journalism. Francis Crick was an early contributor before DNA and the Nobel Prize hit the headlines; Bruno Brunowski began his broadcasting career under Steedman. The arts were not forgotten. Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were other firsts for the service and Matthew Smith gave it his only venture into broadcasting. Lord Denning contributed a series on justice and morality. Bertrand Russell spoke on power and Aneurin Bevan on loyalty. Hugh Gaitskell on equality.

These people came not for the money, nor the kudos, but often for the stimulation which George Steedman provided, the dialectic argument which made brains buzz. He could be brutal, even cruel, in his contempt for any failure to come up to his standards. Many was a slammed door that reverberated after angry departures from his office. But he also enjoyed an intense loyalty and gratitude from those that worked closest with him and many went on to fine careers. Joan Yorke and Joanna Scott Moncrieff became pillars of the BBC's forever popular *Woman's Hour*.

Steedman was never a conventional "corporate" personality. Not for him the convivial canteen lunch or office intrigue at the club bar. He would sit long hours brooding at his desk and if interrupted might treat

the intruder to a lecture on how to make an atom bomb in three easy stages. In the course of giving an annual report he explained at length the working of lavatory cisterns.

He paid the price for his eccentricity and his lack of collegiality. He was sidelined into becoming head of Overseas Regional Services (suffering from the acronym Horse), looking after the broadcasting needs of odds and ends that could not be fitted in elsewhere, the South Sea Islands, the Caribbean, the Falklands, before their hour of prominence. Meanwhile other parts of the corporation were casting covetous empire-building eyes at the European Service, which was soon to be subsumed into an all-embracing World Service.

Later Steedman moved on to yet another largely anonymous department of the BBC, the Transcription Service, a mainly marketing job, the selling of BBC programmes globally. It became one of the BBC's biggest money-spinners and because Steedman was always an innovator he initiated new programmes. His *Typical Types*, a 15-minute news magazine, is still mentioned with admiration. He became the Maccenas of the leading musical festivals, telling world-famous players how to improve their performance. He invented popular quiz games like *My Word* and *My Music* which were lifted into the home services.

The fact that the Transcription Service was selling to the North American market presented Steedman with one of his major achievements. Broadcasting technology in the numerous American stations which clamoured for BBC output was state-of-the-art, far ahead of the BBC. Steedman called on BBC Engineering to make his service competent to cope with this new



BBC European Service

technical challenge. He surprised the BBC engineers with his scientific know-how and modernising zeal. Improved BBC transmission throughout the entire corporation was the result.

On retirement he continued to provide information world-wide with a weekly series of his own, *About Britain*. It was a huge success and won him far, far more mail from around the globe. The series however came to an abrupt stop with yet another of Steedman's spats with BBC authority. He and his wife returned to their roots in the North Yorkshire moors to Newton-upon-Wharfe, the name itself redolent of Steedman's love of science and his fierce uncompromising temperament. But it was not like that at all. He mellowed, wrote poetry, went to church and lent his garden, beautified by Nan's expert botanical care for the vicarage fête.

After a programme once a distinguished guest said: "The trouble with you, George, is you're a scientist *manqué*." The other distinguished guest put in: "No, no, you're a priest *manqué*." Steedman replied: "Don't you make a *manqué* out of me." Anybody who tried did so at their peril.

ANNE SYMONDS

George Steedman, broadcaster: born Caterick, North Yorkshire 9 March 1916; married 1945 Nan Saunders (two sons, one daughter); died Malton, North Yorkshire 31 December 1998.

# Mike Steyn

MIKE STEYN played an unusual part in the musical life of this country, particularly in the folk revival of the Sixties and Seventies.

While other record companies and producers responded to public interest by promoting the forgotten or neglected treasures of Anglo-American folk music, Steyn went beyond the confines of the West, to Africa and Asia. He launched a number of outstanding musicians and singers, some celebrated in their own countries but unknown in Britain, others new and obscure, and launched their international careers. Their music inspired and influenced musicians and singer-songwriters as diverse as Paul Simon and Peter Dinklage, and bands such as Genesis and Fairport Convention.

A fine musician himself, with an unerring ear for tone and colour, Steyn sensed the potential of artists on first hearing them. His high musical standards and his unusual disregard for commercial gain made Tangent Records, the company he started in the late Sixties, a badge of quality. He distributed his productions world-wide through record companies with aims and reputations similar to his own, among them the distinguished Harmonia Mundi in France and Lyricbird in the United States. As a result many of his recordings have endured and become classics of the genre.

Born in South Africa, Steyn showed a precocious aptitude for music. He was virtually self-taught until a bursary brought him to England to study composition and conducting at the Guildhall School of Music, where he was spotted as potentially a star conductor. Among his contemporaries was Jacqueline Dupré, whom he conducted playing Elgar's Cello Concerto with the Guildhall Orchestra. His energy and passionate love of music inspired the members of the orchestra and won him a second grant to continue his studies for a further two years.

In 1958 he was one of 92 candidates taking part in the Morley College Conducting Competition, and won – the chief adjudicator was Sir John Barbirolli, who encouraged him personally. Steyn's success provided him with a year's study at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, and led to engagements with the BBC regional orchestras, the London Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestras.

By then married, with a child, he found that the precarious life of a roving conductor was not providing him with a regular income and the security he needed, and he took a job conducting the orchestra for the musical *Othello*. For a few years he tried to combine such regular theatre work with orchestral concerts, but the two seemed incompatible.



Tangent Records

Though a dedicated musician, Steyn was too modest and independent to promote himself in the competitive world of international conducting, yet he was not content with musicals – his interest was in the works of classical composers, in particular Mozart, Beethoven and Mahler. So he left the profession to work as an independent record producer, learning the ropes from Lionel Segal, the director of Strike Records, then a well-known folk music label.

His own first recordings were with the northern comedians Blaster Bates and Peter Mallory (who had been a Trappist monk), and they became huge hits, particularly the

Blaster Bates series of LPs which are still selling. Steyn could have continued in that field and made a great deal of money, but he was never motivated by money – he followed his heart. With the proceeds from these first hits he started Tangent Records.

Tangent's first three records were of Ethiopian folk music, recorded in Ethiopia by the late Jean Jenkins, then the Curator of Music at the Horniman Museum. Other recordings followed, and in 1976 he released a box of six LPs of music from all over the Islamic world, to coincide with the World of Islam Festival in London – it is now a collectors' item. There followed seven records of Scottish music with Edinburgh University, three LPs with Mustafa Tettit-Addy, the Ghanaian drummer and one of Africa's best-loved musicians, and many more – some 120 recordings of music from all over the world.

When he sensed that his job was done, he left to return to classical music and composition, handing over Tangent's distribution to Topic Records, one of Britain's oldest and best folk labels. Unfortunately he also discovered he had cancer. He devoted the same single-minded effort he had applied to his work to combat his illness, and succeeded in winning long periods of remission – he was given six months by his doctors and lived six years.

I met Mike Steyn with Jean Jenkins in 1969, and sang him a Persian folksong. He gave me a contract for an LP. We recorded *Persian Love Songs* and *Mystic Chants* almost a cappella, with just a touch of flute and hand-drum. In his studio – the crypt of a church in Holland Road, London. A second record followed, of English songs, which led to my receiving offers from major record companies.

Far from binding me with lifelong contracts – at a time when record producers were taking options even on their artists' children, in case they became musicians too – he let me go, saying that his label was too specialised for me. He had the true artist's generosity and humility, and we remained friends. I never released a record without first consulting him.

I made one more record with him, *From East to West*, a fusion of Persian and Western music, produced and arranged by Paul Buckmaster (the arranger of, among others, Elton John and Mick Jagger). Both these records of Persian traditional songs are still extant, on Tangent in Britain and on Lyricbird in the US.

SHUSHA GUPPY

Michael Eugene Steyn, record producer: born Cape Town 23 July 1931; married 1956 Wendy Munton (one son); died London 3 January 1999.

# Irene Serkin



Irene Busch and Rudolf Serkin in 1935, the year they married, at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Tully Potter Collection

FAMILIES DON'T come more musical than those that surrounded Irene Serkin during the course of her long life, both the one she grew up in and the one she created.

She was born Irene Busch in Vienna in 1917, the daughter of Adolf Busch, who was perhaps the supreme representative of the German school of string-playing, and of Frieda Grubers, issue of another family of outstanding musical ability. For nearly six decades, Irene was the wife of Rudolf Serkin, one of this century's most dignified and perceptive pianists. And her own immediate family boasts the pianist Peter Serkin, the horn-player John Serkin and four musician daughters.

The story of how Irene Busch encountered her husband has a fairy-tale quality to it. She was only three years old when her father met Rudolf Serkin, then 17, gawky and

nervous, in the apartment of Karl Gombich (father of Sir Ernst) in Vienna. The two musicians very soon formed a duo-partnership and before long Busch had invited the young pianist to live with his family. At this point Irene, barely past the toddler stage, told Serkin that she would marry him when she grew up – and that is exactly what she did. When Irene reached 17 herself, she and Serkin were wed, in 1935, in Basel.

It would be difficult to say that she grew up anywhere in particular: Berlin, Darmstadt and Switzerland, perhaps, but more often than not she would be on tour with her father, travelling the length and breadth of Europe – and thus, like her husband, she had very little formal education.

Adolf Busch was conscious of his duty to the masterpieces of the Austro-German repertoire (the Beethoven Concerto, for

example, no fewer than 400 times in the course of his career). But he was implacably opposed to the Nazi regime and, at considerable cost to himself, vowed never to play in Germany as long as the Nazis remained in power. (In this he showed a rather soberer insight than the idealistic Wilhelm Furtwängler, who thought he could defend German music from within the Nazi fold.)

The Busches and Serkins, having moved to Switzerland in 1927, thus left Germany permanently in 1933. The Serkins continued to Philadelphia in 1939 when Rudolf was appointed to the staff of the Curtis Institute there, first taking over Josef Hofmann's masterclasses and later becoming director of the Institute. Irene's father and mother followed her to America after a bungled attempt by the Nazis to kidnap Busch and drag him back to Germany.

many (his house was temptingly near the German border; Busch got wind of their plans and made sure he was not at home when the Gestapo came to call).

United in the States, Irene's father, uncle (the cellist Herman Busch) and husband – together with the French flautist Marcel Moyse and his musician son and daughter-in-law, Louis and Blanche Moyse – founded the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont in 1951; Marlboro was to be the focus of much of the Serkins' life from then on.

Irene Serkin was not herself an outstanding string-player, but she was good enough to play in the Busch Chamber Players from the foundation of the group in 1935. And she would always play violin or viola in Marlboro concerts, often in music written by her father. She was an enabler. She and her husband offered

helping hands to countless young musicians over the decades, and she played a prominent role in the musical life of the community around her. The warmth that was a marked feature of the atmosphere at Marlboro was owed in good measure to her.

Her end was as charmed as her life. She had suffered from heart problems but had shown no particular discomfort when she went shopping to find a Christmas tree to adorn the family hearth. Returning home, she took to bed for her usual nap and died peacefully in her sleep.

MARTIN ANDERSON

Irene Busch, musician: born Vienna 21 June 1917; married 1935 Rudolf Serkin (died 1994); two sons, five daughters, and one daughter deceased; died Guildford, Vermont 1 December 1998.





At the unveiling ceremony last December for Vela Zanetti's restored mural 'Mankind's Struggle for Peace' at the United Nations headquarters, his son José Vela Zanetti de las Cuevas addressed UN officials including the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. AP / Marty Lederhandler

## José Vela Zanetti

JOSE VELA Zanetti was best known for his vast mural *La Lucha del Hombre por la Paz* ("Mankind's Struggle for Peace"), created in 1953 for the United Nations headquarters in New York. The artist was in exile at the time, and Spain under Franco was not even a member of the UN.

Less than a month ago, the newly restored mural was rededicated by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in a ceremony attended by the artist's son, José Vela Zanetti, deeply moved by the honour, which he described as one of the great satisfactions of his life, kept photographs of the occasion beside him in his last days.

He had been chosen by the Guggenheim Foundation to create a mural for the UN on the theme of peace in an international competition in 1952. The mural, 20 metres by three, shows the

ravages of war and concentration camps and depicts people pulling together to rebuild a shattered world. Painted in blues and reddish browns, it was inaugurated in the corridor outside the UN Security Council chambers.

Vela Zanetti was born in 1913 in the small northern town of Milagros, near Burgos; when he was still very young, the family moved to the provincial capital, León, where he began artistic training. He won a public scholarship to study art in Florence in 1933, but Franco's revolt and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War disrupted his plans, and the artist later described the years that followed as "long and full of trials".

He fled into exile in 1939. His father, boss of a provincial slaughterhouse, had been shot by fascists in 1936 in the opening days of the war, leaving a permanent scar upon the young artist. "The death

of my father, along with exile, made more of me than normal circumstances would have. His death forced me to explore the limits of my abilities, to be a son worthy of his father."

Vela Zanetti settled in the Dominican Republic, where he produced hundreds of murals, of farmworkers and rural scenes, many of them on a heroic scale. In 1949 he was appointed director of the Fine Arts School of Santo Domingo. He won a John Simon Guggenheim scholarship for young Hispanic artists that enabled him to travel to New York, and he later lived in Mexico, Colombia and Switzerland.

One important work painted in the Dominican Republic hung in the assembly hall of the UN's International Labour Office in Geneva from 1959 to 1968. The untitled painting showed sturdy workers engaged in industry,

building and farming, and remains in the ILO's collection.

Vela Zanetti returned to Spain in 1962, to the house in Milagros where he had been born, and painted all day long. "I get up at dawn to benefit from the light, and I stop painting at dusk. Mural painting has given me this discipline."

He is best known in his own country for portraits of peasants, still-lives, Castilian landscapes and religious works. In 1997 he donated 57 paintings and other works to a foundation in León that bears his name. One of his last works was a portrait of the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí.

ELIZABETH NASH

*Jose Vela Zanetti, painter; born Milagros, Spain 27 May 1913; married Esperanza de las Cuevas (one son, one daughter); died Burgos, Spain 4 January 1999.*

## LITERARY NOTES CEDRIC CULLINGFORD

### A child's pleasure in making flesh creep

THERE IS no doubting the popularity of Roald Dahl. The reason for this might be obvious at first. He writes with unselfconscious exuberance, his stories move at a manic pace and are full of a mixture of exaggerations and simple jokes: "China's so full of Wongs and Wongs every time you wing you get a wong number."

At the same time Dahl relishes the disgusting. He makes great play of a child's pleasure in making the flesh creep. Thus we are caajoled into reacting against sentimentality.

It is only when the parents begin telling us about the brilliance of their revolting offspring that we start shouting "Bring us a basin! We're going to be sick!"

There is palpable pleasure in such an exaggerated feeling. The Twits' revolting habits are described in lurid detail. The idea of crunching the bones of young children returns as a theme again and again.

I'm off to find a yummy child for lunch. Keep listening and you'll hear the bones go crunch.

He cannot resist reiterating, with glee, the pleasures of the revolting.

I'll bet if you saw a fat juicy little child paddling in the water over there at this very moment you'd gulp him up in one gollop.

When the Enormous Crocodile at last meets his match it ends up being swung round and round and being thrown into the sun - "And

he was sizzled up like a sausage!"

All harmless fun? One of the pervasive features of Dahl's books is the sense of manic drive coupled with a delight in the nastiness of human beings. The books are, in fact, driven by half-disguised anger. This might seem like a righteous anger at injustice but is a deeper seated outcry at the human condition.

The parents of James (of *The Giant Peach*) are quickly disposed of.

Their troubles were over in a jiffy. They were dead and gone in 35 seconds flat.

This leaves others to deal with unhappiness as best they can; in the shape of a world full of men "as nasty and mean... as any you could meet". Dahl talks of the life of a writer as "absolute hell", where he lives in "a world of fear". This is not just the fear of running out of ideas but of a deep sense of injustice and anger.

Behind the humour the books convey great conflict. They are about overcoming authority, with rebellion emerging out of a sophisticated co-spiracy. The themes depend on "us" against "them".

"Them" is both no one in particular and everyone. The hatred derives from a sense of revenge and punishment: punishing one or both of them each time they were beastly to

her made her life more or less bearable.

Dahl himself is aware of this fascination with pain, even if it is of an exaggerated kind. In his autobiography *Boy* he writes

you will be wondering why I lay so much emphasis upon school beatings in these pages. The answer is that I cannot help it... I have never got over it.

The abiding sense of anger and shame and the grievance against Dr Coggan, later the Archbishop of Canterbury, for relishing inflicting pain on pupils, is palpable. The whole book, however, is full of pain, of boils and scapels, and canings and humiliations, either suffered or directed against others.

At first sight the manic energy of Dahl seems quite simple and unselfconscious. But it is driven by something deeper... When we recognise that children enjoy all the relish of exaggeration we should not forget why this should be so. The pain that Dahl expresses is recognised by his readers because they also share it. Whereas Enid Blyton seeks escape from trauma by creating a perfect, safe and ordered world, Dahl rushes into a wild alternative set of images that use anger as a means of overcoming suffering.

Cedric Cullingford is the author of *Children's Literature and its Effects* (Cassell, £15/£15.99)

## Muslims seek their Night of Power

THIS YEAR the Muslim holy month of Ramadan started with, literally, a bang. Iraqi Muslims looking for the crescent moon to mark the beginning of the fasting month saw instead American Tomahawk missiles and British Tornado fighters. Both President Bill Clinton and the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said they then stopped the Western Night of Power because of "the holy month".

Obviously intended to portray a humane and sensitive dimension to the devastating and repulsive bombing raids, this bit of news spin had Muslims everywhere in derision. For there is nothing unholy in doing battle with your enemy during the holy month. One of the most crucial battles in early Islam, that of Badr, was fought during Ramadan - as was the Yom Kippur war led by Anwar Sadat in 1973.

In fact, Ramadan is the most combative month in the Muslim calendar. The *sawm* (fast) is actually a declaration of war against the carnal soul, the *al-nafs al-ammarah* of the Holy Book. In fasting, the rebellious tendencies of the carnal soul are gradually dampened and pacified through a systematic submission of these tendencies to the divine will, for at every moment of hunger the soul of the Muslim is reminded that in order to obey divine commands the carnal passions must go unheeded. That is also why the fast does not include only food but also abstention from every form of lust and carnal passion.

According to scholars the rigours of Ramadan should really not be that difficult for a believer. Tradition has it that during the month the Devil is shackled, making it relatively easy for the soul, imprisoned by hunger and thirst, to engage in good works. My local imam has pointed out the particular "blessing" of being a Muslim observing Ramadan in Britain this year. Not only are the fasting hours relatively short but we are performing our obligatory abstinence right in the middle of the festive season. Surely, in a month in which the Lord has promised manifold rewards for acts of piety, we can

only be amassing huge blessings as we maintain our sobriety and temperance in a sea of crapulence and gourmandism.

For a believer Ramadan is a month full of divine gifts, hence the salutation *Ramadan Karim* - "Ramadan the generous". Life is normally organised around a set of rituals that aim to maximise on the special spiritual rewards on offer. It is a time during which one is encouraged to recite the Holy Book, to remember God and participate in special prayers.

The central core of the holy month, however, remains the *Laylat al-Qadr*, the Night of Power (or Destiny). This commemorates the night in the

prompt the believer to devote himself completely to God during every night of this month in the hope of coinciding with that night which has been kept deliberately obscure. Muslims must desire to watch out for the mystical night but in Britain few can practically do so; little of "ordinary life" changes during the holy month, making the prospect of staying awake during the night possible only if there was no work or college the next day.

The scholars have, however, narrowed down the odds with most holding the opinion that the Night of Power is in the last 10 nights of Ramadan, which are therefore taken to be particularly holy. If that is the case, then in 12 lunar months' time the eve of the new millennium might be the very night in which the heavens are, literally, set alight by the splendour and mercy of God.

To have completed the fast of Ramadan is to have undergone a rejuvenation and rebirth which prepares each Muslim to face another year with determination to live and act according to the divine will. The fast also bestows a spiritual perfume upon the human soul whose fragrance can be perceived long after the period of abstinence has come to an end. It provides for the soul a source of energy upon which it feeds throughout the year. The holy month has therefore been called *mubarak*, "the blessed", one in which the grace or *barakah* of God flows upon the Islamic community and rejuvenates its deepest sources of life and action.

Those who seek to violate the boldness can expect the opposite. For Bill Clinton, Ramadan has brought impeachment; for Tony Blair it has brought his first major crisis in government. Which makes particularly apposite the fact that some scholars (including my local imam) believe the Night of Power might not be in these last 10 days but could be the first night of the month - the same day the "Western Night of Power" unfolded on the skies of Iraq.

Nobody really knows for certain on which date this holiest night falls. Scholars say this ambiguity is a secret wisdom to

## FAITH & REASON

FUAD NAHDI

*The holy month of Ramadan brings blessings to the devout but a rather less comfortable condition for the impeached Bill Clinton and an embattled Tony Blair*

year AD 610 in which the Koran descended, in its entirety, into the soul of the Prophet. In that night the Angel Gabriel first spoke to the Prophet, the Koran was revealed, and the divine mission began. In a season preoccupied with sales and shopping the Night of Power is the ultimate bargain for a believer. The Holy Book in chapter 97 describes the Night of Power as "better than a thousand months... peace until the rising of the dawn"; for sheer spiritual value there is nothing to match it in the entire universe.

Nobody really knows for certain on which date this holiest night falls. Scholars say this ambiguity is a secret wisdom to

## GAZETTE

### BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

#### DEATHS

**LINTOTT:** On 7 January 1999, peacefully at home, aged 80 years, David John, consultant radiologist of Roundhay, Leeds, much loved by his wife Anne, sons Francis, Kim and Matthew, brother William and wider family and friends. Funeral service and committal in St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Shaftesbury Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 2DS, on Thursday 14 January at 1pm, followed by private cremation. Flowers may be sent if desired, or donations if preferred will be shared between St Gemma's Hospice, Leeds, Shelter and Sylvia Wright X-ray Appeal. All may be sent c/o John P. Temples Funeral Service, 46 Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 4LA. Telephone 0113 239 2700.

**LOCHHEAD:** Peacefully, on 6 January 1999, Alexander Cargill Lochhead, of Amthill, aged 71 years. Much-loved husband of Katie and father of Angus and Karen. Funeral service takes place on Saturday 16 January, 10.15am at Norse Road Crematorium, Bedford. Flowers or donations for Cancer Research may be sent c/o Neville Funeral Service, The Old Church, Filwick Road, Amthill, Bedfordshire MK45 2NT; telephone 01525 406152.

#### CHANGING OF THE GUARD

**TODAY:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

### FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

**Mr P. L. Jones and Miss S. M. Tann**  
The engagement is announced between Paul Idris, son of Dr and Mrs Bob Jones, of Horsington, Somerset, and Stephanie Marie, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Tann, of St Austell, Cornwall.

**Mr D. H. Jones and Dr V. S. Ramrakha**  
The engagement is announced between David Hugh, son of Dr and Mrs Bob Jones, of Horsington, Somerset, and Vandana, daughter of Dr Sat and Dr Urmila Ramrakha, of Nairobi.

#### BIRTHDAYS

**TODAY:** Major Derek All-husen, farmer and Olympic equestrian, 85; Sir John Alliot, High Court judge, 67; Dame Elizabeth Anson (Lady Anson), former chairman, Association of District Councils of England and Wales, 68; Miss Joan Baez, singer, 58; Mr Hugh Bayley MP, 47; Miss Mary Bennett, former Principal, St Hilda's, Oxford, 86; Mr Paul Bergme, former ambassador to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, 62; Sir John Buckley, former chairman, Davy Corporation, 86; Mrs Christine Crawley, MER 49; Mr Clive Dunn, actor and comedian, 77; Sir Tony Durant, former MP, 71; Sir Graham Eyre QC, a Recorder of the Crown Court, 68; Mr Graham Fletcher, show jumper, 48; Father Benedict Green, theologian, 75; Mr Terry Hands, theatre and opera director, 58; Mr David Holbrook, writer, 76; Mr Leslie

Holliday, former chairman, John Laing Construction, 78; Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys, Wolfson Research Professor of the Royal Society, Leicester University, 49; Mr Simon Jervis, Historic Buildings Secretary, National Trust, 56; Mr Herbert Lom, actor, 82; Mr Michael Nicholson, television newscaster and reporter, 62; Sir Harry Ognall QC, High Court judge, 65; Miss Joely Richardson, actress, 34; Mr David Smith, cricketer, 43; Mrs Vicky Tuck, Principal, Cheltenham Ladies College, 46; Viscount Ullswater, former government minister, 57; Mr David Walker, High Commissioner to Bangladesh, 59; Mr Geoffrey Wragg, racehorse trainer, 69; Miss Susannah York, actress, 57.

**TODAY:** Births: John Jervis, Earl of St Vincent, admiral, 1735; Lascelles Abercrombie, poet and critic, 1881; Dame Gracie Fields (Grace Stansfield), singer and actress, 1898; George Balanchine, choreographer, 1904; Richard Milhous Nixon, 37th US president, 1913. Deaths: Caroline Lucretia Herschel, astronomer, 1848; Katherine Mansfield (Beauchamp) (Kathleen Middleton Murry), writer, 1923; Karl Mannheim, sociologist, 1947; Waldo David Frank, novelist, 1967.

**TOMORROW:** Births: Dr George Birkbeck, educationist, 1776; Alexei Nikolayevich Tolstoy, novelist and playwright, 1883; Dame Barbara Hepworth, sculptor, 1903. Deaths: Carolus Linnaeus, botanist, 1778; Samuel Colt, gunsmith, 1862; Samuel Dashiell Hammett, detective

story writer, 1961; Elspeth Huxley (Grant), writer, 1997. On this day: the penny post was begun (although the first stamps were not available until 6 May), 1840; the London Underground (Metropolitan Railway) system was started, 1863; the tomb of Cleopatra was discovered, 1890. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Agatha, pope, St Dermot or Diarmid, St John the Good, St Marcian of Constantinople, St Peter Orseolo and St William of Bourges.

#### ANNIVERSARIES

**TODAY:** Births: John Jervis, Earl of St Vincent, admiral, 1735; Lascelles Abercrombie, poet and critic, 1881; Dame Gracie Fields (Grace Stansfield), singer and actress, 1898; George Balanchine, choreographer, 1904; Richard Milhous Nixon, 37th US president, 1913. Deaths: Caroline Lucretia Herschel, astronomer, 1848; Katherine Mansfield (Beauchamp) (Kathleen Middleton Murry), writer, 1923; Karl Mannheim, sociologist, 1947; Waldo David Frank, novelist, 1967.

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#### LECTURES

**TODAY**  
National Gallery: Lynda Stephens, "New Beginnings (ii): Borromeo, *Pair of Lovers*", 12 noon.  
Victoria and Albert Museum: Norbet Jopek, "One by One: European commemorative medals from the Great War 1914-1918", 2pm.  
Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Pleasure from Rough Art: Impressionism and Risk", 1pm.  
British Museum: Nigel Barley, "The Golden Sward: Raffles and the East", 11.30am; Delia Pemberton, "Talking Pictures: looking at Egyptian hieroglyphs", 1.30pm.  
National Portrait Gallery: Ann Kodicek, "Shapes for Spaces: Henry Moore's public art", 3pm.

**TOMORROW**  
Victoria and Albert Museum: Yasmin Hales, "The Role of the Indian Artist", 2pm.  
Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Identified Figures in Well-Known Works", 2.30pm.  
National Portrait Gallery: Paul Webb, "John Buchan", 3pm.



## ARTS &amp; BOOKS

## The race against time

Radically old-fashioned – that's how Stephen Poliakoff describes his latest TV drama. What can he mean? By David Benedict

First of all, clearly, I don't have a video camera. And for the first time in my life it would have helped having one. Bit bloody late to buy one, this being the last afternoon of my life." Timothy Spall's pudgy face looms into the lens. He's recording the extraordinary events of his final days and, 13 seconds into the BBC's new drama *Shooting the Past*, you're hooked.

As Spall nibbles on a slice of toast and girds his storytelling loins, he whets our appetite still further, explaining that his story is of vital importance because it can happen to anyone: "Anyone who has suddenly lost their job or house or even business, or just had someone promoted above them. Anyone who knows how that feels, this is for you."

This vivid opening sequence is not only arresting, it's a startlingly clear statement of intent by the writer and director Stephen Poliakoff. He not only tightens the narrative screw with the threat of Spall's impending death, he alerts you to the drama's themes: the quirkiness of individuals, the collision between past and future, the responsibilities of individuals and, above all, the recording of history. *Shooting the Past* is a race against time, set in an anachronistic library housing a priceless collection of millions of historic photographs, overseen by a skeleton staff headed by the coolly authoritative Lindsay Duncan and the eccentric, cardigan-wearing Spall. When an American businessman (Liam Cunningham) arrives, announcing that he has bought them up and that the collection must be sold, opposing worlds collide.

"I would love it if people said it was old-fashioned," beams Poliakoff, enveloped in a comfy, wing-backed chair in his Islington, London home. His brief was to write something that people wouldn't easily forget – "Quite difficult," he says, grinning over his understatement – but it led him back to his lifelong fascination with the power of photographs.

Although the piece is, in his own words, "dialogue-heavy – there's no reason why TV can't do dialogue", pictures are at its heart. There are two pivotal sequences vaguely reminiscent of the classic scene in Antonioni's *Sixties* film *Blow-Up*, where we watch David Hemmings discover a murder in a series of pictures he has taken by accident. Here, we and the characters gaze at a succession of photographs brought together by Duncan to show to Cunningham. The first tells the true story of a Jewish girl in pre-war Germany but, although her tale is extremely moving, Poliakoff isn't just out to evoke pathos. It's a crunch moment in the plot and, even as we respond to the pic-



Stephen Poliakoff: 'I've deliberately tried to slow television down, but to make it compelling'

John Voos

tures, we're aware that Duncan is manipulating the story for her own ends. It's a gratifyingly complex scene.

Writers are usually reticent or downright evasive about their objectives but Poliakoff is unusually forthcoming. His early stage work has been described as cinematic. In 1989, however, he wrote: "Cinema is generally the wrong medium to try to reveal complex character changes or to attempt to operate dramatically on two or three levels at once. Both are clearly central aspirations in most of my plays." Ten years later, that statement is supported by these two telling sequences. Ultimately, *Shooting the Past* is an exploration of charac-

ter and circumstance in a medium poised between film and theatre. "I was determined to write something with long, sustained scenes, the sort of thing one can only do on television... you can in theatre but in a different way. I wanted to do something that wasn't trying to be cinema yet would use the power of great acting in close-up. I've deliberately tried to slow television down, but to make it compelling."

To that extent, it genuinely is old-fashioned. "Radically, I hope," asserts Poliakoff. That's a hardly surprising word for someone whose work has been political with small "p" since his first play back in 1971 when he was just 19. He's always regard-

ed his writing as political but not as in agitprop or even as part of the Seventies wave of writers who believed Britain was teetering on the brink of revolutionary change.

"I've tried not to write within conventions or genres and to be provocative about showing the nature of whatever world in a different way," he says. "That, I think, is a political act."

His early plays, like *Hitting Town* or *City Sugar*, dwelt in an urban world of neon and concrete populated by disaffected youth. He gradually moved further afield, winning a huge audience for *Caught on a Train*, a gripping, one-off BBC drama about a man who travels to Vienna accidentally, ac-

companied by an elderly, terrifyingly austere Viennese woman memorably played by Peggy Ashcroft. Then, in 1984, he wrote *Breaking the Silence*, based on his grandfather, an inventor who dressed as if for the opera and travelled on his own train. All this in *Leninist Russia*.

His most famous work, however, is his 1991 film, which has been something of a calling card ever since. *Close My Eyes* was about an incestuous relationship between brother and sister Clive Owen and Saskia Reeves during the last gasp of Eighties greed. It was set in Docklands and the bewitchingly beautiful Home Counties. That sense of place, the physical and political

context, is his hallmark. If Pinter hadn't already used the title, he could have called any number of his works *Landscape*.

Place and safety within any given society are obviously key Jewish concerns, so does the literal and metaphorical importance of location stem from Poliakoff being Jewish?

"That's never been put to me," he says, surprised. "I think it may be." Yet his London upbringing was only Jew-ish. He'd been sent to an extremely Anglican Surrey prep school where he was the only Jew. "On Sundays we all had to turn to face the altar and say the Creed and everyone would look at me because I didn't know what to say. It was a powerful reminder of being separate. I always felt slightly apart." Discomfiting, but no bad thing for a writer, and it had a powerful effect. "I was there for five years and was pretty unhappy. It gave me a terror of authority."

That, too, continually resurfaces in his writing, the tension between being connected to and separate from institutions, structures and authorities. "Yes," he muses. "I write about fear quite a lot." All this comes together in *Talk of the City*, his fascinating recent RSC hit, about to transfer to the Young Vic. In the far-off land of 1937 BBC Light Entertainment, a happy-go-lucky crooner and comedy man becomes involved in dangerously subversive ideas about what was happening to Jews in Europe.

Period plays are, of course, as much about the time they are written in as the era in which they're set. "As we're about to burst into a realm of thousands of channels, now seemed the right time to do it." In 1937 the BBC had only one channel, which was even broadcast across America – "Imagine *Casualty* being beamed across the whole of the United States!" he giggles, gleefully – but it was experiencing a similar reign of management terror and control as the current corporation.

"I'm very interested in the power some people have over others. We're living in a very controlling world and all sorts of people no longer know what's going on. In *Shooting the Past*, someone comes in from the outside world, hushes through the door and says, 'You've got to come under this discipline.' That has to be resisted." He concedes that it's difficult to see where that resistance is going to come from. "But then, nothing ever runs in straight lines," he remarks, confidently. "Something is going to happen."

*'Shooting the Past' starts on Sunday on BBC 2; 'Talk of the City' is at the Young Vic from 3 Feb (0171-928 6333); the scripts are published by Methuen.*

## THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

More fun and fewer  
nuns – Michèle Roberts  
on food, sex and God

PAGE 14

## Who says the young aren't Romantic?

WHAT HAVE Jonathan Coffey, Naomi Hazlett, Jonathan Deakin, Kate Andrews, Ben Morrow, Kate Milne and Heidi Sutcliffe in common?

Well, precision, intelligence, talent, commitment for a start. For these are all members of the magnificent National Youth Orchestra, star turn of last year's Proms, which has just got 1999 off to a bumper start with concerts in Symphony Hall, Birmingham and Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, where they played last night.

This was a programme that might have warmed the cockles of Sir Simon Rattle, himself

a percussive former member of the orchestra: Wagner's "Prelude" and "Liebestod" from Tristan Debussy's *La Mer*, Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration", and (with close repeated applause you could feel heaving, Wembley-like, round Symphony Hall, Ravel's "La Valse" – the apotheosis of not just the Viennese Waltz, but of almost everything.

So much impresses about this 150-strong mass of fledgling virtuosi – some of whom may well, in time, form the core of our principal orchestras. First, as conductor Yan Pascal

## CLASSICAL

NATIONAL YOUTH  
ORCHESTRA/TORTELLIER  
SYMPHONY HALL  
BIRMINGHAM

Tortellier pointed out, these gifted youngsters have a mere nine days to amass a programme, making phenomenal demands on musical precision. The thoroughness of their preparation, and their practical and instinctive grasp of giant-scale late Romantic scores (they take Mahler in their stride), is breathtaking.

Furthermore, they reveal a

dynamic grasp not just of microscopic finer detail but in a macrocosm too, mastering massive structures that could, otherwise handled, be diminished to thin rhetoric.

Lovingly nursed by Tortellier, these cheerful prodigies encompass Wagner's taxing, long flowing epic lines like fully-fledged professionals; likewise in the Debussy, with its endless surge and ebb and flow highlighting individual sections – trumpets (marvellously lucid), full brass chorus (top-notch), the gorgeously intoned, soaring solo violin of leader Jonathan Coffey or the seabird cawing

above the foam of flute, piccolo, clarinet – there was much that shone. The opening bars, with their whisper of four beautifully focused harpists, the initial leaf-like rustle of strings, and the first hint of trumpets, was as magical as the finale was deafening, while from the exquisite opening of the Strauss on second violin and violas – a vast harmonised sea of strings heaving dead together (the later scudding fast passages in first and second violins were equally finely co-ordinated) – you might think we had a budding LSO on our hands.

Just here and there inexperience showed – a slight languidity in the full wind chorus, some string over-reliance prior to the bewitching close of the Strauss. But any temptation in rehearsal to rush the "La Valse" was triumphantly resisted in performance. From a dense score sprung a wealth of instrumental clarity (low-rocking bassoons, horns, bass clarinet, trumpets 1+2, eight-strong varied percussion) and a joyous nonchalance. Nobody fluffed. And no-one was late at the dance's dazzling demise.

RODERIC DUNNETT

## The rhythm and blue flame

## JAZZ

GEORGIE FAME  
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL  
LONDON

CLIVE POWELL has been Georgie Fame since 1989, when the promoter Larry Parnes wanted someone to play keyboards in Billy Fury's band, and to take the beat off him a little in the daft name department. It worked, but just for two years. Fame left with Fury's band, the Blue Flames, and took up residency at the equally unlikely sounding Flamingo Club in Soho, launching a career that has swerved effortlessly in and out of R&B, pop, novelty tunes and big band jazz ever since. In some ways, Lancashire-born Fame and Georgie Fame have paved the way for the Northern Soul movement; a northern accent somehow seems more in tune with the loose delivery of African American blues and swing artists. Fame does it so well that the American singer/pianist Mose Allison looked to the British artist for inspiration when it came to making R&B records.

Fame's band work has a lot going for it. He's powerful and sure-footed enough to be comfortable in front of an 18-piece

band. His measured delivery squeezes the emotion out of a standard in a way that must make the likes of Bacharach, Donovan and Lennon and McCartney proud. You'd want him to sing your song.

The band did a couple of tunes by themselves before Fame made an authentically showbiz entrance, finger-drumming and air-punching to his first great hit, "Yeh Yeh". Gershwin's "But Not For Me", complete with an ingenious arrangement by the director Steve Gray and a skilful lyrical version of a lovely old Chet Baker trumpet solo, was a masterpiece. Eight tunes in, he sat at the Hammond organ, briefly turning a homage to the Bull's Head Jazz Club into a Jimmy Smith-style soul jazz shuffle blues.

But Fame spent almost every other moment pacing in front of the orchestra.

The cult composer Lalo Schifrin once remarked that he'd told his wife he wanted the BBC Big Band for his next birthday. From the composer of the themes to *Bullitt* and *Mission: Impossible*, this was some endorsement. But Mrs Schifrin's lack of generosity was Georgie Fame's gain. This long-running orchestra's association with Radio 2 has done nothing to blunt its sharp edges.

There's something about the opening shock blast of a good jazz big band that makes the corners of your mouth curl. Steve Gray looked as if he were trying to suppress a grin all night. The BBC Big Band did it all, from ballads to R&B and a rendition of Fame and Gray's original "City Life" that almost defined swing.

All in all it was a worthy commemoration of a 40-year career, and Georgie Fame proved he still has what people's dads call star quality. A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper.

LINTON CHISWICK

Sometimes,  
art  
is an act of  
survival



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مكتبة الامم



THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES

EXCELLENT GOOD OK POOR DEADLY

OVERVIEW	CRITICAL VIEW	OUR VIEW	ON VIEW
<b>THE FILM LITTLE VOICE</b>  This adaptation of Jim Cartwright's stage hit tells the story of an autistic girl whose silence is broken when singing along to Judy Garland records.	"Try as they might, the film-makers can't make <i>Little Voice</i> any less dowdy and cramped than it looked on stage. This is drama still smeared with greasepaint, and chock-full of exits and entrances that scream theatre matinee," remarked Anthony Quinn. "An oddly depressing experience that seems to respect neither its characters nor its audience," grumbled <i>The Guardian</i> , while <i>The Big Issue</i> deemed it "essentially a showcase for the karaoke skills of Jane Horrocks." "A banal showbiz parable redeemed by fine performances," decreed the <i>Daily Mail</i> .	Even with Horrocks's startling vocal capacity and good performances from the cast, <i>Little Voice</i> brims with clichés and proves better suited to the stage.	<i>Little Voice</i> is on general release, certificate 15. 97 minutes
<b>THE PLAY SONG AT TWILIGHT</b>  The theatre critic Sheridan Morley revives Noël Coward's 1966 play about a writer forced to confront his homosexuality when a young actress produces an incriminating letter.	"The ironies surrounding this current production are rather more interesting than the production itself, which lacks confidence and definition," reflected Paul Taylor. "Decidedly creaky," carped <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> , adding, "the dialogue... clearly meant to fizz like the pink champagne served in the play - has the stale quality of the stuff you find at the bottom of glasses on the morning after..." <i>The Stage</i> said: "Morley fails to bring life to a piece which remains resolutely static from beginning to end." <i>The Daily Mail</i> noted: "The overall delivery is mostly too pleasant... One hopes the rest of the Coward year sets the pulse racing a little faster."	Hindered by lackadaisical performances from Corin Redgrave and Kiki Markham, Morley fails to infuse the play with suitable verve. An awkward start to Coward's centenary celebrations.	<i>Song at Twilight</i> plays at the King's Head Theatre, London N1 until 24 January. For bookings and enquiries call 0171-226 1916
<b>THE ALBUM JAY-Z</b>  Following up his 1998 album <i>In My Life</i> and riding on the success of the chart-hugging single "Hard Knock Life", the East Coast rapper Jay-Z returns with a third album.	"The overwhelming impression left by raps like 'Ride or Die' is depressingly downbeat, a desultory rehearsing of the only narrative available to black American youth today," opined Andy Gill. "Another rap album by a multi-platinum yank who means sold all over here... Who would've thought that the promised land was just a black BMW and a mobile phone?" remonstrated <i>Time Out</i> . "Anyone expecting drowsy rap dripped over samples from Broadway musicals will be in for a rude shock. Here is a darker, more aggressive side to Jay-Z," countered <i>The Big Issue</i> , while the <i>Sunday Mirror</i> quipped "The album has more of the clever hip hop that makes us crazy for Jay-Z."	Yet another slice of hip-hop cliché. With song titles like "Money, Cash, Hoes" and "Ride or Die" Jay-Z has failed to rise above the misogynist, gangsta-obsessed sentiments of American rap.	<i>Vol 2... Hard Knock Life</i> (Northwestside) will be available from record shops on Monday
<b>THE CIRCUS SHOW CIRQUE DU SOLEIL</b>  Following its immense success last year, French-Canadian circus troupe Cirque du Soleil brings <i>Alegria</i> to the Albert Hall. Directed by Franco Dragone.	"One disappointment of <i>Alegria</i> is its po-facedness," announced Steven Poole. "Ordinary actions are carried out in a bizarre, debased ballet style, and there is a lot of pointless running about with stiff arms by the large supporting cast." "I've tried to pick holes in Cirque du Soleil's shows in the past, but this time I give up," confessed the <i>Evening Standard</i> , adding "Resistance is useless; go along, be amazed, enjoy it." "The serenity is one of the most striking features of this marvelous show, the suggestion of effortless achievement arrived at with a grace that smiles in the face of gravity," gushed <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> .	The humourless expressionism of the Cirque du Soleil will annoy devotees of old-fashioned circus slapstick, though their spectacular acrobatics cannot fail to impress.	<i>Alegria</i> is running at the Albert Hall until 24 January. For bookings and enquiries, call 0171-589 8212

EXIT POLL

THE PLAY  
Krapp's Last Tape  
ARTS THEATRE  
LONDON

**WILL REILLY**  
24, management consultant, London  
"I thought it was great - as tragic to watch as it was to read. It's deeply upsetting, deeply moving. I felt a little uncomfortable about some of the slapstick stuff at the start, but I do feel Edward Petherbridge captured Krapp quite well. His reaction to the tapes were exactly how I would expect it to be. I found the whole experience quite moving and quite tragic."

**AMANDA CALVERT**  
50, translator, Moscow  
"I have never seen it performed before. It's a very beautiful play. The words get the gist of life, very beautiful words. And beautifully performed. It's about the important things in life as you get older, such as memory and love. I loved the play straight away."

**CHRIS McCULLY**  
31, lecturer, Manchester  
"It has wonderful structure and it's beautifully crafted. What I find so significant about this production is how Petherbridge gauges the weight of silence, which is probably one of the hardest things to achieve on stage. And it was perfect. The silences in the text are really part of the dialogue that Krapp is having with himself and partly his dialogue with the audience - it's very difficult to pull off. I really enjoyed it. This is up there with the very best."

The higher the platforms, the harder the fall

EDWARD II's steep decline from glittering sybaritic sodomite to the poor, forked animal who meets his grisly end in the sewers of the Tower of London has never been charted more graphically than in this exhilarating Cherub Company production, which tackles the Brecht adaptation of Marlowe.

Clad in a gold puffball skirt and precipitous platform heels, Mariano Caligaris's monarch begins as the last word in painted outé transvestism, dancing crotch to crotch with Christopher Gunning's Gaveston, a lean, insolently edible bit of rough who emerges here as a prototype of Orton's Mr Sloane. Vainly quavering a liturgical song as buckets of filth are chucked over him from on high, Caligaris's king ends as a stark naked, shivering mite who lays himself vulnerable to the erotic nursing of his murderer.

Brecht's adaptation is a systematic denial that there was any seamless tragic inevitability to this 19-year process. History is created by specific, often petty and unrecorded choices, as he illustrates in the play where it is claimed that the Trojan war, fought over a whore, erupted in an alehouse on the waterfront where a Greek bloodied a man's nose and pretended he was doing it for Helen.

Because of that, Hector died in the blood of his genitals and the world was consoled with the *Iliad*.

This clinical and ironic angle on history as a manufactured business, full of botched shots and missed alternatives, is mordantly communicated here. The production presents the play as a sort of Expressionist fairground attraction, replete with whirly platform stage, sardonically incongruous dance-band tunes, and a chorus of frock-coated bourgeois barons who could have stepped from the canvases of Dix or Grosz and are supplemented by puppets of themselves. Performed with hard-edged flair and fluency, it is a show that collapses the division between backstage and on-stage. Instead of Brechtian captions, cast members race to the front to deliver droll historical time-checks to the implacable beat of a drum.

It's a staging that succeeds in offering colliding perspectives on Edward - a character who achieves belated humanity even as his persistent refusal to abdicate (a switch from the Marlowe) plunges England into a prolonged political crisis and the threat of foreign invasion. On the equivocations of power, the production is, throughout, very witty. For example, the mitre of the Bishop of Winchester is bifurcated and folds over itself, like a rabbit's ears cocked to pick up sounds from opposite directions. This bet-hedging headgear is fitting for a cleric who claims that the Church is always on the side of God and that God is always, well, on the side of the winner.

I last saw this play in an extraordinary bilingual event in Paris where English and French actors performed, in turn, a drastically edited version, like some highbrow *Jour Sont Frontières*. It is good now to experience a fuller account, in a show which makes a case that this financially threatened company deserves funding to secure its survival.

PAUL TAYLOR  
To 17 Jan. Booking: 0181-741 2255

Poetry's not dead yet. But is it alive?

ON NEW Year's Day, the poet Robbie McCauley asked an audience of hundreds in an East Village church to shout out the names of white people. Taylor Mead, the former Andy Warhol superstar, shouted back: "Barry White!" This was no Baptist revival meeting gone awry but the 25th anniversary of the all-day reading at St Mark's Poetry Project. An audience of 800, the largest since the Seventies, jammed into the church to catch 10 hours of poets - and a generous helping of celebrities cum poet wannabes such as Patti Smith, Eric Bogosian and Jim Carroll. It was like a roots consciousness group for New York's most brooding celebs.

There were the annual poetry fest's staples - down with sexual McCarthyism, up with the Whitmanesque yawn. There were the Steinians, the Ginsbergs, the Untouchables, the poetry graduates reading prettily bland stanzas.

One young experimentalist was complimented by two florid nymphet ravers named Magnolia and Ginger. Another gazed wistfully at what she called "impressive packages" of the oule rock'n'roll poets.

The best thing about this event is that it shows that New York poetry, with its 350 monthly readings, isn't dead - though that's not to say it's totally alive, either.

NEW YORK DIARY



ALISSA QUART

The only New York art form pronounced dead as often as poetry is painting. For a while, gallery owners and critics have argued that painting is making a comeback, as young painters in Brooklyn explore neo-geo patterns and swirls. This week, the gossip *New York* magazine carried an article strewn with photos of gleaming-faced 29-year-old painters in front of their colourful canvases.

Damian Loeb is one of those painters - a draftsman now in the big league. At his opening on Thursday, uptown at Mary Boone, Loeb, wearing a policeman's jacket, stood in front of his large photo-realistic paintings of largely appropriated images. There were Ku Klux Klansmen and the bloody corpse of a half-naked woman on a subway platform with men in Santa Claus costumes reading tabloids. His

paintings were on sale for \$15,000. Amid the younger men in Pradaish attire was an older man in a houndstooth jacket, one of Loeb's collectors.

He told me that today's art market was "a collector's paradise." "There's so much going on in Damian's pictures," the collector said proudly referring perhaps to the painting of a hubbly-headed LA teenager in a car, with men in fatigues gunning people down behind them.

Loeb and the other new New York painters have been touted as a fresh breed, a firm departure from the decadent Eighties painters, modest, even idiosyncratic, with Loeb's work some of the flashiest of the lot. No monumental canvases or monumental prices.

"Painting certainly is alive. I don't foresee it dying any time soon," says David Frankel, a critic for *Artforum*. He adds that the public pronouncement of painting's new life is "commercial as well as intellectual. For a moment it became important to say that painting was dead. That became a problem for people trying to sell art."

One of the best things about poetry is no one says it's alive to fatten their pocket books. Forty years ago, the poet and critic Frank O'Hara wrote a line that could describe the rush to birth and death certificates in art: "Naming things is only the intention to make things."

Cornwall or bust

THEATRE

FREEBIRD  
NEW VIC STUDIO  
BRISTOL OLO VIC



On the road to nowhere: William Ely and John Berlyn in 'Freebird'

THE BRITISH road novel and movie have always suffered from an inferiority complex with respect to their beefy American cousins. Partly this is due to the nature of our roads - 187 miles of M1 is hardly in the same league as the sweeping 2,000 mile grandeur of Route 66, and the persistence of roadworks on the M5 means that one is unlikely to enjoy that windswept, "nothing but us and the horizon" feeling of *Thelma and Louise*.

But primarily it is a problem of association. It is hard to find the sense of dislocation and rural otherness so useful to American authors within the narrow confines of this scepter'd isle. There are few banjo-playing inbreds in Basingstoke - although perhaps not as few as one would like.

Nevertheless, Dorset writer Jon Iway has made a valiant stab at the genre with his new play *Freebird*. It centres on a trip by three motorcycle couriers, the epitome of late Nineties urbanism, to darkest Cornwall in search of a rarest cannabis farm. What starts out as a relaxed weekend in the country gradually transforms itself into a bad trip, in every sense of the term. With its sadlebags packed full of humour and pathos, this is a very British *Easy Rider*.

Iway and director Ian Hastings have overcome one obvious handicap in the development of the road play, namely the fact that a stage is a stationary environment. The economical set is dominated by three motorcycles facing the audience, and the use of iconic back projection, sound and lighting succeeds in creating a genuine sense of motion.

The first act is an entertaining collection of on-the-road snapshots which explore the world of the biker, the small-time criminal and the druggie with dry wit. William Ely's 'Igg', who at first glance is an 'all mouth and no trousers' biker, reveals himself to be a far less secure and more lovable character. John Berlyn's performance manages to lift permanently stoned drug connoisseur Grouch out of the mire of the dopehead cliché. Grouch may be a caricature, but he is a multidimensional one who is touching and funny rather than just gratingly monotonous. Together with Fred, played by Iway himself, they stumble into the countryside weighted down by all the city-dweller's prejudices about this strange rural world.

Unfortunately the second act fails to live up to the promise of the first, as the characters slip into a mushroom-induced haze and the play sitters to a hallucinogenic ending. The plot - shaky from the start - finally unravels completely with William Burroughs replacing Alan Ayckbourn at the scriptwriting controls. This is a shame since Iway has a keen talent for realistic dialogue and characterisation. However, the unsatisfying final half-hour should not be allowed to overshadow a pleasant evening of humour, recreational drug use and loud rock music.

TOBY O'CONNOR MORSE

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

FIGMENT FILMS, the company behind *Trainspotting*, has invited would-be scriptwriters to pitch to them via their website. But Andrew Macdonald (*below*), head of Figment, says the quality of ideas pitched so far has been disappointing. Most have either been inner city drug-addict stories or highland historical epics. "The strangest one," he tells *Premiere* magazine, "was about a little boy who blows up the moon, throwing the menstrual cycle of every woman in the world off kilter." It sounds a great movie to me. Spielberg could direct this global explosion of PMT; the leading ladies of Hollywood and Britain would have the acting challenges of their careers. Chemists could cash in on the merchandising. Go for it, Andrew.

Hilary Strong has accomplished one small victory for common sense. This year for the first time a daily diary published at the festival will incorporate main festival and fringe events. But, despite Ms Strong's urgings, you will still not be able to buy tickets for main festival and fringe events at a common box office. For people arriving in Edinburgh this is just nonsense. The main festival may be territorial about its product, but the punters in Edinburgh in August just enjoy seeing shows. Very often they don't know and don't care to which particular festival the shows belong.

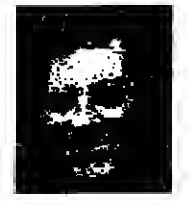
IN RESIGNING as director of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this week Hilary Strong has caused a little mischief, as any holder of that post should. She told me she was quitting because, with the advent of a Scottish parliament, the person running a key Edinburgh cultural institution should be Scottish. "I'm English and it's time to go back where I belong," she says. I suspect she won't be getting any thanks for that statement from Brian McMaster, director of the Edinburgh International Festival, Timothy Clifford, director of the National Galleries of Scotland, or Mark Jones, director of the National Museums of Scotland. None of them is Scottish; and the last thing they want is a debate on Scotland's cultural leaders.

To her credit

THE NEW Year Honours List again found no place for Vanessa Redgrave. It's not just that her career over 40 years should have made her a dame by now; it's also that last year she was responsible, though insufficiently credited, for wresting Tennessee Williams's first play from the Williams estate and bringing it to the National for its world premiere. Surely it couldn't be that the Blair government is wary of honouring a brilliant actress who happens to have had ultra-left affiliations?

"APART FROM that, what did you think of the show?" part 3: At the new Sadler's Wells up in the second circle they are having alarming premonitions, it seems. Geoffrey Walker of London writes in to say: "A single staircase particularly of these dimensions is insufficient to move an audience in acceptable time. I have heard many patrons remark that they hope there won't be a fire, as they shuffle for up to 15 minutes to get out."

THE WEEK IN RADIO



MAGNUS MILLS

THERE WERE several occasions during David Mellor's conversation with Chris Eubank when the pair of them must have felt like throwing in the towel. They got together last Sunday to have a cosy fire-side chat about operas and symphonies, only to find themselves being constantly interrupted by hordes of boxing commentators. Across the *Threshold* (Classic FM) was billed as the fighter's introduction to classical music, and at two hours duration the programme promised to be more than just a lightweight contest. The formula was simple: Mellor began with the music that started it all for him, then

listened to a favourite of Eubank's followed by something he thought his guest should get into. And so on. It was a nice idea and both parties seemed happy to listen to what the other had to offer. Only trouble was, every time either of them passed a critical remark, the excited voice of a ringside reporter would cut in with a comment of his own. This was most distracting.

"Did that do anything for you?" asked Mellor, after playing a piece by Johann Strauss. "No," replied Chris Eubank. "A very good counterpoint right up there!" bellowed the pundit. These interruptions happened time and time again, as

though the two men were beating the living daylight out of each other, rather than taking part in a civilised discussion. Not that Eubank was helping matters much. Very little seemed to impress him, and even after an aria from Jussi Björling he dared to say, "I've heard better." An instant later the roving sportscaster threw in his periwinkle: "He's very dangerous with his back to the ropes like that!"

After the news break the continuity announcer joined in the boxing theme, describing Mellor as "going into the ring" with Eubank. This was getting serious. DM was stunned into silence as his opponent subjected him to a dreary poem about the soul. Manfully he came back with Brahms's Third Symphony, ordering Eubank to listen to it once a week for the

next three months. The bout was declared a draw.

I'll tell you what though, pop-pickers, there's a lot of this classical stuff about. Over on Radio 2, Alan Freeman was returning with a new series of *The Greatest Hits*, the Tuesday night session in which he plays as many prime cuts as possible. If you're going to try to popularise the classics, then Fluff is definitely the best man for the job.

"Greetings, music lovers," he began, before giving us some momentous chunks of Verdi, Chopin, Haydn and Beethoven interspersed with orchestral jingles, assorted fanfares and potted librettos. What

we didn't get was a run down of the Top 20, Freeman's speciality. Nonetheless, consolation was at hand in the shape of Mozart's Symphony No 40 in G minor. As the veteran DJ pointed out, not only was this a hit in the late 18th century, but it also got to Number 5 in the Pop Charts in April 1971. Wow! And to avoid an outbreak of domestic disputes, he played a snippet of the "other version" which charted the same month, known simply as "Mozart 40".

"Alright?" he asked, in time-honoured fashion. Yes thanks.

By the way, in tomorrow's edition of *Across the Threshold*, David Mellor faces Ronnie Corbett. The big bully.

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## THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

## How to lose the abbey habit

In fiction, as in life, Michèle Roberts wants more fun – and fewer nuns. By Christina Patterson

The first surprise is that Michèle Roberts has swapped her house in Holloway, full of colourful clutter and a sense of benign decay, for a compact City pied-à-terre in a gleaming modern block a stone's throw from the Bank of England. Even the lilies in the vase match the white walls and cream furniture. We drink white wine, too, but Roberts is quick to point out the red wine stains on the carpet from a recent party. Hedonism has not yet been expunged from the life of this writer whose main concerns, expressed in the title of her collected essays, are "Food, Sex and God".

Food is still a central pleasure and a theme of almost pornographic sensuality in her work, but she's slimmer than when I last saw her. These days, she keeps an eye on her weight and swims every day. Michèle Roberts is nearly 50, and she is glowing. Suspicious of new technology, she has finally swapped her Olivetti, with its bouncy keys "like little finger-tip trampolines" for a word-processor ("I always want to call it a food-processor") and found that her almost superstitious fear of losing the writing ritual evaporated. "It was like a new seduction," she laughs, "a better machine, a better lover, better technique..."

The move to minimalism has more than a little to do with the fact that her stepsons are now old enough to flee the nest. If Roberts has chucked out her chintz and most of her books and furniture, it is only as far as her house in Normandy, where she spends "about 60 per cent" of her time and does most of her writing. It is, however, difficult to resist a feeling that there has been some serious streamlining and radical change, particularly in the light of the biggest surprise of all. Her new novel, *Pair Exchange* (Little, Brown, £15.99), set at the time of the French Revolution, is a rollicking good read with not a nun in sight.

Michèle Roberts without Catholicism would, one imagines, be a little like Woody Allen without neurosis. Since her first novel, *A Piece of the Night*, in 1978, she has explored the world of catholics and convents, visions and virgins, sex and sin, with lush detail and passionate intensity. Her female characters exhibit a lust for life that they find impossible to square with their Catholic roots, a tension that has led to wild flights of surrealism. This culminated in her previous novel, *Impossible Saints*, a subversively playful collection of fables, hursting with madonnas and whores, dismemberment and incest.

*Pair Exchange* seems an infinitely calmer affair. Split, like Roberts, between London and Normandy, it tells the tale of two young women, one French, the other a pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft, who discover love, motherhood and independence against a background of revolution. Both grapple with the scandal of extra-marital pregnancy, a dawning feminist consciousness and, as in all good page-turners, a secret. There's still a sense of play, with shades of *Jane Eyre* and Angela Carter, but it all feels very much less self-consciously clever than her recent work. Calvino and Kristeva seem to have receded and the Marquis de Sade replaced, dare I say it, by Gertrude Stein. Is this fair?

"Yes, I think in a playful way I wanted to come out and say I've read a lot of her stuff and I really have loved it... I think it's going to appeal to people who like stories, who aren't frightened by romance as a form



## MICHÈLE ROBERTS, A BIOGRAPHY

Michèle Roberts was born in 1949 to a French mother and an English father and brought up in Edgware. After a convent-school education, she read English at Oxford, where she became a founder member of the first women's street-theatre group. During the Seventies, she was a pregnancy counsellor, a librarian, a hippie, a

lesbian, a feminist activist and the poetry editor of *Spore Rd.* Her first novel, *A Piece of the Night*, was published to great acclaim in 1978, followed by *The Visitation* (1983) and *The Wild Girl* (1984), a controversial fictionalised account of the life of Mary Magdalen. She has published five other novels including *Flesh and Blood* (1994), which

provoked comparisons with Woolf, Colette and Joyce, and *Daughters of the House* (1992), shortlisted for the Booker and winner of the WH Smith Literary Award. Her other publications include a collection of short stories, a book of essays (*Food, Sex and God*) and three collections of poetry. She is married to the artist Jim Latter.

and who don't expect everything to be very clever and lofty." Certainly, there's a new lightness of touch, a sense of maternal presence to replace the familiar theme of maternal absence – and a conspicuous lack of Catholic guilt. "I felt that having written eight novels which scoured out my soul and my unconscious, it would be fun to write something a little more light-hearted. I killed off some old demons in *Impossible Saints* and solved something about Catholicism and why I'd found it so damaging".

There is, she points out, an ex-convent joke for her husband, Jim, who announced firmly after the last book, "Mim! I think you've done enough nuns". Roberts has not, however, thrown out the baby with the bath-water. She now believes that "God is immanent... like a shorthand for the connection between people and things and the world".

It's something of a relief to hear that she's "not into Goddess", since the brand of feminism that surfaced in her early work is sometimes associated with the crude Jungian archetypes appropriated by New Age types in tie-dye pantaloon. She is still

intrigued and inspired by Jung, but thinks that he was "probably a randy old huffer who fucked all the women and then told them off for having an animus problem". Dreams, usually a central part of her writing experience, featured less this time, and even the genesis of the novel was different.

In the past, her novels have started as a haunting image, but this one was the idea of her French publisher: "We were having lunch in Paris one day and he said 'Hey, I've got a novel for you to write'. Roberts immediately knew that this period, of incipient feminism and political radicalism, was her opportunity to 'grapple with what we went through in the Seventies' – a novel she had wanted to write for five years.

It all sounds considerably less angst-ridden than her previous work. "I think I'm in a happier, more contented state of being". Domestic happiness (she and Jim have been together for 11 years), Catholic catharsis and literary acclaim seem to have created a calmer climate in which she is free to explore the power of storytelling. She was, when she was small, the family storyteller, but it was an impulse she

learned to suppress as she adapted to "some-one else's story, a story told by the Catholic Church". "Now I feel I can sit on top of the story," she announces. "It's like sitting on your mountain and thinking I can walk around this mountain any way I want".

If Roberts has learnt to demystify fiction, writing poetry remains for her "almost like a religious experience". She has talked before of "the utterance of poetic language as a feminine pleasure recalling the baby's blissful babble at the maternal breast". How far does this relate to her own poetry? "I do feel that there's something quite basic going on," she agrees, "which is a need to speak from the unconscious". She has published three collections of poetry, but confesses that she is "in a real crisis" about it. Her poems are, like her fiction, passionate, exuberant and sensual, but they are not "what the people in power like... My poetry is not establishment poetry".

Perhaps not, but her status leans more towards the establishment than away from it these days. She has been shortlisted for the Booker, won the WH Smith award, does regular tours for the British Council and

is an occasional presenter for Radio 3. In the chic flat overlooking the Thames, the years of sleeping in coats in cold squats and living on peanut butter and carrots seem far away. Her anger has dissipated a little, her frustration softened by "ordinary happiness", but her passion remains as strong as ever. "I feel I wasted a lot of my precious youth and my thirties sorrowing and suffering," she laments. "I love meeting new people, I love conversations. I love food, I love sex and I love wine... I've always been greedy for life, but I think I was so fraught about it I wasn't always enjoying it".

Duality is a constant theme in the work of this writer, who is half-French, half-English, and a twin to boot. It is a theme that she seems to be acting out in a polarised double life. In London, she sips wine at literary parties and looks after the public side of her life as a writer. In France, she writes like a demon, cooks delicious meals, digs the garden and chats to the neighbours about vegetables, pigs and the weather. "There's a bit of me," says sleek Michèle Roberts on the elegant cream sofa, "that really likes walking about grunting".

## COVER STORIES



SENSIBLE VOICES have noted that, in relation to Nick Hornby's sales, his alleged £2m advance for world rights to two books is probably quite a bargain. Neither was his move to Penguin born out of avarice. Gollancz has changed much since he signed up with *Fever Pitch*, but nothing was more significant than the death of Liz Knights, the editor who nurtured his talent. With Gollancz recently acquired by Orion, he would seem to have made the break at the right time. And had Hornby done an *Amis*, hawking himself around every publisher in town, he could surely have made twice as much.

NEITHER DOES greed explain Sue Townsend's move to Penguin. Loyalty does, for the creator of *Adrian Mole* has rejoined her editor, Louise Moore, who defected from Methuen when the company was acquired by Random House. Townsend was less than happy with the way that her last novel, *Ghost Children*, was published, and her decision to quit Methuen will cost her dear: she will have to repay her advance. Just as the young Mole was highly critical of Thatcher, so 30-year-old Adrian will be equally critical of Blair in *The Cappuccino Years*, due this autumn. Just as well, then, that Townsend has left Random House; its chief executive, Gail Rebeck, is one of Tony's cronies.

BERTELSMANN, THE German media combine which now owns Random House, has embarked on an examination of its conduct during the Second World War. In a series of articles, historian Hersh Fischer alleges that, under the Third Reich, the company published more than a dozen books expressing pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic sentiments. Though Bertelsmann was shut by the Nazis in 1943, Fischer contends this move had more to do with black-market sales than any political dissent. Thomas Middelhoff, the firm's new chief executive, has appointed a panel to investigate allegations. He has promised that "no matter what we find, we will tell the public".

CRIME FICTION'S two leading Ladies, P D James and Ruth Rendell, have joined forces with WH Smith to raise money for Shelter. Until the end of the month, the retailer will donate £1 every time a customer buys two books by one or both authors. On 28 January, Lady James and Lady Rendell perform a literary double act for a Shelter benefit at the London Planetarium. Tickets, price £10, are available from London branches of WHS.

THE LITERATOR

## Recipes for repression in the well-ordered household

Liz Jensen wishes that this buttoned-up, neatly-ironed queen of the quiet domestic trauma would learn to let her hair down once in a while



The Love of a Good Woman  
by Alice Munro

Chatto & Windus, £14.99, 340pp

WHEN IT comes to evoking a subtle mood, a complex thought, or an emotional pulse-beat, Alice Munro is in a class of her own, and in this collection of closely-observed slices of domestic truth, her touch never falters. But it never alters, either. This is both a marvel and a disappointment. It is as though Munro has precision-ironed a set of very similar shirts. Admirable though this is, one can't help wishing she'd left something crumpled.

In many of the stories, Munro presents time-lapse snapshots of

women in relationships, families and proxy families, their decay charted across decades. Her clinical observation of this bio-degradation is both wise and acute. But the sharpness of the stories – and the characters who inhabit them – is blunted by a creeping sameness.

Thoughts of culpability and powerlessness evaporate and condense again in the minds of her protagonists, mostly women on the margins of action, like the young wife who takes a part-time job looking after an incapacitated old man and learns of

his possible involvement in the dark past of a distant island. But the story deliberately suffocates the details of the ancient atrocity, and the truth ends up smoothed over by female collusion. The Law of Literary Understatement, which Munro is rightly revered for adhering to, decrees that less is always more. Here, though, it feels like less.

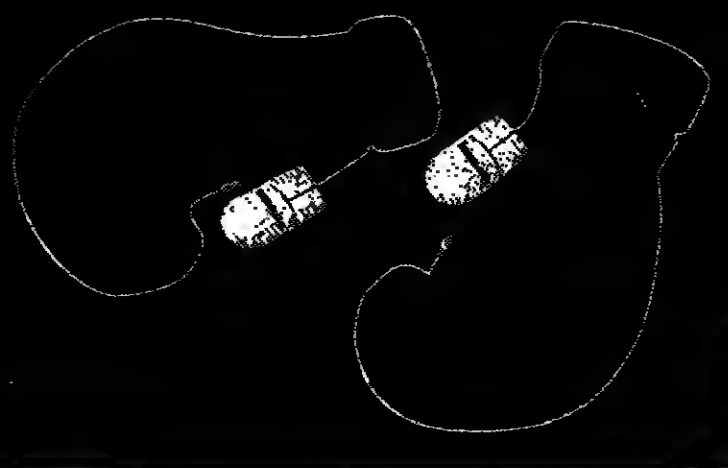
The almost novella-length title story begins in a museum in the Canadian town of Walley. Alongside butter churns and horse-harnesses lies a box of instruments dredged

from the watery grave of Mr Willens, an optician whose car plunged into the Peregrine River in 1961. The box contains an ophthalmoscope – a relic which becomes a metaphor for the multi-lensed narrative of how the optician met his fate. Munro reveals the story of his mysterious death first through the eyes of three boys who see his hand apparently waving from his sinking car, and then from the point of view of Enid, who nurses the dying, Hitler wife of the man who may have killed him. You fear that Enid will fail to confront the pos-

sible-probable murderer, and love him instead. But the idea is amorphous, and one is left gasping for something solid. And thinking petulantly, after 70-odd pages, is that it? In "Before the Change", Munro comes the closest to finally having herself a ball. When a young woman assists her doctor father in performing an abortion, "out of the womb now came plops of wine jelly, and blood, and somewhere in there the fetus... a tiny plastic doll as negligible as a fingernail". Here the writing suddenly buzzes with energy and

comes alive, so that when the woman reveals her secret, there is true pathos, humour and surprise. Like a set of marks traced into the sand of a beach, *The Love of a Good Woman* contains a delicate genre of writing which leaves only a faint, homoeopathically thin imprint of itself behind before vanishing. This is both the glory and the failure of this collection. You can see that life is probably like this, but you'd rather it were not. By the end, Munro's understated truths left me hungry, and craving the nourishment of lies.

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# Biting back at the Woolf pack

Virginia and her pals still bewitch writers of fact and fiction. Ray Monk points out the pitfalls of Bloomsbury biography

**G**ranite and Rainbow is such a perfect title for a life of Virginia Woolf that it is a wonder it has not been used by one of the previous dozen or so biographers. The phrase comes from her essay, "The New Biography", in which she expressed her scepticism about the whole genre. Quoting Sir Sidney Lee's remark that "the aim of biography is the truthful transmission of personality", she wrote: "No such single sentence could more neatly split up into two parts the whole problem of biography as it presents itself to us today. On the one hand there is truth; on the other there is personality. And if we think of truth as something of granite-like solidity and of personality as something of rainbow-like intangibility and reflect that the aim of biography is to weld these two into one seamless whole, we shall admit that the problem is a stiff one and that we need not wonder if biographers have for the most part failed to solve it."

In "The Art of Biography", Virginia Woolf criticised Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex* for attempting to solve this problem by combining fact and fiction. Lacking documentary evidence for the "tragic history" he claimed to see lying, half-revealed and half-concealed in the available facts about Elizabeth I and the Earl of Essex, Strachey simply invented what he could not prove. This, Woolf insists, will not do, for fact and fiction, the granite and the rainbow, "destroy each other". Strachey's book is a failure but "it was not Lytton Strachey who failed: it was the art of biography".

Biography, constrained by the granite-like world of observable fact, is not an art but a craft. To convey successfully the rainbow-like world of personality the intangible nature of thoughts and feelings, one has to enjoy the artistic freedom of the novelist. That is why paradoxically, "fiction is likely to contain more truth than fact".

Very few novelists or biographers have thought about, or felt, the problem of biography more deeply than Virginia Woolf. The question "how does one understand and convey the inner life of another human being?" dominates her criticism, her novels and, arguably, her life. To understand her thinking about biography is, to a surprisingly large extent, to understand her.

Hermione Lee saw this very clearly, which is why her recent biography of Woolf begins with a chapter discussing Woolf's views on the genre. Disappointingly, Mitchell Leaska's book, despite its wonderfully apt title, does scant justice to the intensity and subtlety with which Woolf thought about the problem of biography. His book begins with a confused introduction, in which he woefully misuses

Woolf's metaphor by insisting that his task as a biographer is to uncover the "granite behind the rainbow", the "real thing behind appearances". This is bad enough (for the whole point is that the rainbow, though intangible, is every bit as real as the granite), but it gets much worse when one realises that this is no mere momentary slip, but rather symptomatic of a general confusion on Leaska's part.

The central weakness is that, whenever he attempts to summarise Virginia Woolf's thoughts about fact, fiction and reality, Leaska comes hopelessly adrift. He attributes to her an extreme form of subjective relativism, according to which "something was only true... if you believed it". Woolf, he claims, believed that truth was "both relative and contingent upon the reader's subjective perception of the world", and that each perception was different, so that "reality was no longer public" but "private, personal, idiosyncratic, subjectively construed".

The odd thing is that time and time again, Leaska himself provides the evidence that Woolf believed no such thing (she could hardly have objected to Strachey's mixing of fact and fiction if she did). He summarises the plot of Woolf's short story, "The Unwritten Novel", in which the unnamed narrator, sitting opposite a woman on a train, begins to fantasise the life story of this woman. When the train reaches its destination, the woman alights to join her waiting son and the narrator's guesswork is revealed to be wrong. However, Leaska does not appear to notice that, if Woolf believed what he claims she believed, she could not have written this story. For, on his account, there would be no room for the notion of getting it wrong: thoughts and beliefs about reality would be indistinguishable from the facts and therefore not amenable to verification or falsification.

The purpose of Woolf's metaphor of granite and rainbow was to highlight, not obliterate, the difference between the truth of fact and the truth of fiction. Leaska's confusion on this point is not a minor flaw, but runs like a fault-line throughout his book, threatening to reduce it to incoherence. It undermines, for instance, his many, otherwise enlightening parallels between the events in Woolf's life and the incidents described in her novels.

To describe the ways in which Woolf drew on her memories of her mother, Julia, in creating Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* is to perform a useful service to scholarship; but to claim, as Leaska does, that in doing so he is revealing the granite behind the rainbow, the "real thing behind appearances", is to miss the point.

*To the Lighthouse* is a novel, an artistic creation. If it expresses important



Virginia Woolf and her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, in 1902

Hulton Getty



Granite and Rainbow: the life of Virginia Woolf by Mitchell Leaska  
Picador, £20, 513pp



The Hours by Michael Cunningham  
Fourth Estate, £12.99, 230pp

truths, this cannot be because it includes facts about Julia Stephen. The biographer's obligation is to the facts; the novelist's to the integrity of creation. These two are not related as appearance to reality. The rainbow is not the appearance of the granite; it is made of different stuff.

Leaska's crude confusions make his book easy prey to the fashionable, facile dismissal of biography. When people insist that the facts of a writer's life cannot explain the work, they are right. Where they are wrong is in thinking that the task of the literary biographer is to explain a writer's work. It is not; it is, rather, to understand the writer. When a biographer makes the same mistake, he is in trouble.

Leaska's misunderstandings of Virginia Woolf's thinking and his reduction-

ist view of biography impose severe limitations on his ability to understand Woolf herself. To that extent, his book suffers by comparison with the biographies of Quentin Bell and Hermione Lee, both of whom showed a far subtler grasp of Virginia Woolf's intricate and fascinating personality. However, this is not to say that Leaska's book is entirely without merit.

It is the product of immense scholarship, which Leaska builds into his narrative with an impressively light touch, frequently drawing the reader's attention not only to the finished texts of Woolf's novels, but also to early drafts and alterations. Moreover, when he is not discussing metaphysics, Leaska writes extremely well, and the book is, for all its limitations, an absorbing page-turner - particularly in its treatment of

Woolf's final breakdown and suicide, which is heartbreakingly moving.

He is also very good on her parents, who are portrayed more vividly than in any other book I know. Equally vivid is his account of Woolf's romantic relationship with Vita Sackville-West; though, characteristically, Leaska misses the fact that *Orlando* is not just about Vita. It is also, crucially, about the limits of biography.

"If only subjects had more consideration for their biographers!" Woolf wrote in *Orlando*. "What is more irritating than to see one's subject, on whom one has lavished so much time and trouble, slipping out of one's grasp altogether and indulging (in thought). If the subject of one's biography will neither love nor kill, but will only think and imagine, we may conclude that he or she is no better than a corpse and so leave her". This is precisely the problem a biographer of Woolf has to face. So much of her life was spent thinking and imagining that, unless one has a very rare insight into her mind, all the time spent in ascertaining the facts of her family, loves and so on will not prevent her from eluding one's grasp. With his eye fixed on the granite, Leaska has missed the rainbow and, therefore, most of what is really interesting about Woolf. The result is a "hidden" life in quite a different sense to the one intended.

Ray Monk is the biographer of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell

## Michael Arditti meets Mrs Dalloway in a novel of parallel lives

ACCORDING TO the writer Gilbert Adair, "The Postmodernist Always Rings Twice". In my experience, this is a serious under-estimate. The postmodernist rings again and again - refusing to give up, even when the hapless reader is covering behind an armchair. And here, with his hand pressed firmly to the bell is Michael Cunningham, delivering a copy of *The Hours*; yet another in the long line of novels about novelists, fictions infused with other fictions, art which imitates art. Cunningham appropriates the original title - and much else besides - of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, as he interweaves an account of Woolf's work on the novel with tales of its after-life in 1940s Los Angeles and 1990s New York. The first strand, in which he sticks closely to the versions of Woolf's writing and publishing familiar from the writer's own *Diary* and Richard Kennedy's *A Boy At The Hogarth Press*, is the most achieved. He convincingly captures Woolf's fragile sensitivity as she remains confined in Richmond under the benign wardship of Leonard.

The second strand sees Mrs Dalloway published and exerting its grip on Laura Brown, a Los Angeles housewife who yearns to escape from domesticity. As she bakes a cake for her war-hero husband and prepares for the birth of their second child, her only escape lies in reading. The third strand centres on a lesbian publisher, Clarissa Vaughan, whose name and temperament have led her erstwhile lover and lifelong friend Richard to christen her Mrs Dalloway. Clarissa is throwing a party to celebrate the now dying Richard's award of a major literary prize.

Cunningham's last novel, *Flesh and Blood*, was a sprawling family saga; *The Hours* is a tight-knit conceit. The writing is elegant, at times exquisite, offering striking images such as a man patting his pregnant wife's stomach "carefully but with a certain force, as if it were the shell of a soft-boiled egg". But the conscious emulation of Woolf's style reduces the expression of a unique sensibility to the level of accomplished pastiche.

The problem is that *The Hours* is a book about links rather than life. Woolf fans will have a field-day noting the correspondences between Clarissa Vaughan's world and Clarissa Dalloway's: both women spend their day planning parties; both are startled by the return of old friends; both have daughters in thrall to older women; both are affected by men who commit suicide. Yet, ultimately, this amounts to very little: it is the cleverness of crossword puzzles rather than the complexity of art.

Cunningham clearly intends the serious theme of the changing role of women - it is a far cry from Virginia's thwarted trip to London and guiltily incestuous kiss on Vanessa's lips to Clarissa's independent life with her partner, Sally. But this is constantly undermined by a structure which is saying that women's sensibilities are all the same. Moreover, the connections are largely arbitrary. Laura might just as well be reading *Daniel Deronda* as Mrs Dalloway, while Clarissa Vaughan appears to inhabit a universe in which nicknames is fate.

As a result of a friend's quip 30 years previously, she finds herself the contemporary embodiment of a Woolf heroine. It is fortunate that Richard did not opt for another literary namesake, Clarissa Harlowe; given the novel's logic, she would have ended up drugged, raped and shamed.

## When Nick met Bridget on the beach...

FUELLED BY the glad tidings of Nick Hornby's two-million transfer deal, wannabe novelists will this week be sitting down all over Britain (or Brighton and Crouch End, at least), eager to make good all those resolutions about committing their inspiration to print. Now, I speak from the receiving end of the 4,000-odd new works of fiction issued in Britain every year, and my best advice remains, as ever: *Don't do it*.

If you must, then try at least to shun the shopworn formulae that currently litter the trend-seeking brains of agents and publishers like so many yellowing cracker mottoes. In newspapers, faddish ideas turn into fish-wrap within the week (thank heavens). In books, they can hang around for years. So this is the kind of thing I especially want to avoid during 1999 (and, alas, far beyond):

**This Life Goes On (and on...)**  
A hip, hot, yet curiously cool tale of neurotic middle-class house-sharers coming to terms with their sexual confusions, Law Society exams and that mouldy package in the back of the fridge. Thrill to the flat, featureless dialogue of a book stuffed with randy but deadily dull trainee conveyancers just like its readers (and its author), who'd all rather be watching TV anyway. *That's life!*

**The Fulham Broad Way**  
In which the ditsy Junior Fashion-Shoot Assistant at *Procos* magazine somehow resides in Mandelsonian splendour in SW6. There she wavers between the charms of a coke-addled Soho film producer and a Horsey who owns a Wiltshire rectory stocked with damp labradors. Posh brand names, frilly underwear, designer drugs and

### A WEEK IN BOOKS



BOYD TONKIN  
A few dead horses you may see flogged in bookshops soon

that old Biological Clock, ticking all the way from Titanic to the Met Bar.

**Dad's the Comedian**  
Hornby-gauge Bloke grows up, sires a spog or two, gets in touch with his feelings and mooches wryly around

the DIY superstore of a Saturday afternoon in between serious talks with the Sensible Partner. Lots of stuff about old records, old girlfriends and Facing Up to the Challenge of Baby Poo, preferably written by a half-forgotten stand-up with a hefty therapy bill whom some out-of-touch publisher imagines is still famous.

**Growing up Tropical**  
Amid the oleanders, jacarandas, salamanders, etc. of the spillover paradise of Tristan da Cunha, the serpent of adolescent sexuality traps our nubile young heroine in its coils. Nature throbs and oozes in sympathy as she falls for a slinky young rebel and so brings the cruel forces of masculine, imperial authority (PC Plodvana) crashing down on the doomed young couple. (Author registered with major model agency.)

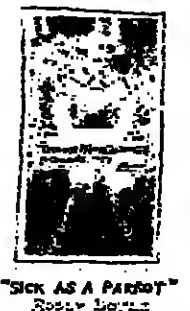
**Grammar-school Hooligan**  
A riot of Stanley knives, Doc Martens, Ben Sermans and two-tone sounds down at Scunthorpe United during the Winter of Discontent (or was it the Falklands War?) Emetic boot-on-bone action joins acne-age angst and political allegory in this bleak tale of teen mayhem by a very nice boy who was doing his A-levels and Oxbridge entry at the time, actually.

**Countdown to Catastrophe**  
Y2K! CIA! TWA! RIP! Jumbos fall from the sky! Mainframes shut down! Checkouts refuse your switchcard! Can our greying but still virile retired agent thwart the info-terrorists and stop Millennium meltdown? And can a sozzled old hack who has run right through his redundant cheque get Harrison Ford on board and carry on making those alimony payments?

### ERRATA by FELIX BENNETT

#### TRANSFER FEVER

Nick Hornby



THE BOY DONE GOOD, 'E GAVE II 10%, BUT IT'S A GAME OF TWL BOOKS



A killer strikes in Las Vegas...

# MOON MUSIC

...only then do the real games begin

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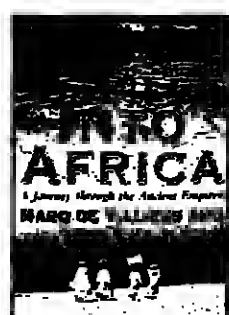
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## PAPERBACKS

BY EMMA HAGESTADT AND CHRISTOPHER HIRST

Into Africa: a journey through the ancient empires by Mark de Villiers and Sheila Hirtle, Phoenix, £14.99, 400pp



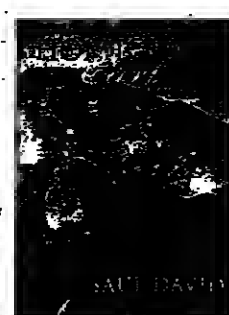
IT SOUNDS like a great idea. Veteran hack de Villiers takes a clockwise circuit of the ancient continent from Zanzibar to the Rift Valley, supported by historical background by Hirtle. This ambitious project doesn't come off, due to the domination of de Villiers's reporting. Usually this is colourful and interesting, such as being pursued by vigilantes in Mozambique while riding pillion with a one-legged bicycle taxi driver, but, in his determination to extract copy from every encounter, de Villiers often ends up describing nothing in particular. Visiting a crowded bar in an AIDS-ridden area of Zambia, he helpfully notes, "It was impossible to have a conversation. Not that I needed to know much." Still, a colourful primer for anyone planning an African jaunt.

The Final Passage by Caryl Phillips, Faber, £6.99, 205pp



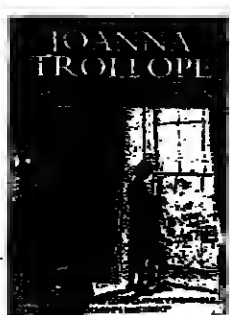
LEAVING THE "life-supporting" blue skies and seas of the Caribbean behind, 19-year-old Leila, her husband Michael and baby son leave for England. But the mean streets and small-eyed inhabitants of their new country do nothing for Leila's already "leaky" new marriage. Michael's drinking gets worse, and Leila is left with only the health visitor for company. Alternating between England and the matriarchal world of St Kitt's, Phillips's acclaimed first novel (originally published in 1985), shows him to be a shrewd observer of frustrated lives. He is an author who lays the blame as much at history's door as on too many hours spent sleeping it off on the steps of the "Day to Dawn" bar.

The Homicidal Earl: the life of Lord Cardigan by Saul David, Abacus, £10.99, 527pp



BETTER THAN Simon Schama, Saul David has re-cast history as addictive narrative. A perfect panoply villain, Lord Cardigan is best known for destroying the 11th Hussars. Ironically, the Charge of the Light Brigade temporarily restored the reputation of this frothing martinet whose career was all but sunk by a series of scandals, often unbelievably petty in nature. A national brouhaha ensued when he court-martialed an officer for drinking un-decanted wine at a dinner. David insists Cardigan was no misbegotten idiot - after leaving the army, he became a respected parliamentarian - but his besetting sin was arrogance compounded by insecurity. This dazzling portrait of an unpalatable figure is not to be missed.

Other People's Children by Joanna Trollope, Black Swan, £6.99, 320pp



IF YOU'VE yet to be convinced by Joanna Trollope, her latest novel may well convert you. Not a welly-hooped Home-Counties girl in sight, as this page-turning read examines the impact of divorce and remarriage on two very different families. Eight-year-old Rufus is taken away from his dad and elegant town-house in Bath to start again in a middle-England terraced housing estate; meanwhile his new stepbrother and sisters leave suburban bliss for life in an isolated, bitterly cold cottage in the Herefordshire countryside. Trollope is wonderful at describing children under pressure, and the best scenes here recount the misery of waking up to an empty fridge and a mother who prefers atmosphere to central heating.

Faking It: the sentimentalisation of modern society edited by Digby Anderson and Peter Mullen, Penguin, £7.99, 217pp



IT IS unlikely that these 12 essays would have shot into the bestsellers were it not for a seven-page fragment on Princess Diana by Anthony O'Hear, whose marginal views about a moment of national hysteria ("Feeling was elevated above reason") were bizarrely condemned by Tony Blair. Other contributions are equally bracing. The Rev Peter Mullen's opinion of contemporary religion ("cosy, patronising and babyish") will have been confirmed by many Christmas sermons. Though acute, Mark Steyn's dissection of American TV news is akin to shooting fish in a barrel, while Ian Robinson is on thin ice, citing the deeply cranky D H Lawrence as a bulwark against sentimentality.

SPOKEN WORD  
CHRISTINA HARDYMENT

Shakespeare: his life and work performed by Judi Dench and Timothy West, CSA, 2hrs, £8.99

SERIOUS SHAKESPEARE huffs will have got to grips with everything there is to know about the man of the millennium by now, but I found this combined biography and commentary on the plays so engrossing I listened to it twice. Although little is actually known of the Bard's life, there are plenty of theories about it - and much lively contemporary comment. This is woven into brief outlines of the plays, presented in chronological order, and illustrated by extracts read with great versatility by Judi Dench and Timothy West.



The Reader read by Charles Dance, HarperCollins, 3hrs, £8.99

THIS MOVING, deeply truthful novel examines the crisis of conscience of Germans about their shared guilt for the Nazi concentration camps through the medium of a love affair which links two postwar generations. Bernard Schlink writes with a lucid clarity that makes him an excellent audio author - the more so since an intrinsic part of the plot of *The Reader* is that books are read aloud on cassette for the benefit of the imprisoned, illiterate heroine. Charles Dance has exactly the right cool, precise objectivity required to put across this haunting love story.

A Hard Time To Be a Father by Fay Weldon, Flamingo, £6.99, 262pp



FAY WELDON gets more appealing with age. In her latest collection of short stories, therapists and geneticists are given all the best lines. These clinicians of female destiny seem both to fascinate and annoy Weldon. But whether dealing with procreation or termination, the author's agenda is clear: mothers must die for children to move on; husbands must leave if wives are to prosper; and foetuses must take their chances where they can. She's humorous, too - particularly the stories "My Mother Said" (about the perils of maternal advice) and "Inspector Remorse" (the ethics of adultery). Weldon tackles life's more intractable dilemmas with gusto.

Scorn, with Extra Bile edited by Matthew Parris, Penguin, £5.99, 320pp



Q: WHO wrote that a royal demise caused "the total suspension of common sense and sincere human feeling for a fortnight"? A: GBS on the death of Queen Victoria. This dyspeptic pocket book is the perfect accompaniment for January hangovers. Of course, the famous verbal assassins are well-represented: "The rage of the sheep is terrible" (Whistler on Wilde); "The Teasy-Weasy of Fleet Street" (Littlejohn on Worthington); "A tadpole of the Lakes" (Byron on Keats). But Parris's tawdry ranges far and wide. "With all my heart," replied John Horne Took to the suggestion that he should take a wife. "Whose wife shall it be?"

The Many Lives and Secret Loves of Josephine B by Sandra Gulland, Review, £9.99, 438pp



TOLD IN the form of diary extracts, the first volume in American Sandra Gulland's straightforward and likeable re-telling of the life of Josephine Bonaparte is laced with ribbons and pocket detail. Brought up in a Jean Rhys-like Martinique of sugar plantations and voodoo spells, Rose (as she is then known) is shipped off to France at the age of 15 to secure a suitable marriage. But with her new title of Vicomtesse comes tight corsets, painful childbirth and the terrors of the French Revolution. As the novel ends, so does Josephine's marriage, leaving her just the right side of 35 to catch the eye of the upwardly mobile Corsican, Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Brontës: a life in letters by Juliet Barker, Viking, £9.99, 415pp



THE ACCLAIMED Brontë biographer has brilliantly crafted these verbal snapshots into an epic home movie - touching, passionate and amusing. While the three sisters giggle at suitors ("he began to season his conversation with Eibernian flattery") and scribble like maniacs, we see brother Branwell decline from arrogant young Turk to decrepit sot ("contribute to get me five pence worth of gin"). The star of the show is Charlotte. Her view of the Crystal Palace as "strange, elegant but somewhat unsubstantial" is oddly familiar. She describes Emily in June as "Dark, stormy and bitterly cold." Some things never change.

Forgotten Life by Brian Aldiss, Abacus, £6.99, 313pp



TEN YEARS on, the second book in Brian Aldiss's Squire Quartet has lost none of its vibrancy. In a generous and funny novel, Aldiss slips happily between life in contemporary North Oxford and wartime Burma. Clement Winter, analyst and don, has the job of sorting out his dead older brother's papers. A young soldier with the Forgotten Army, Joseph has never settled down. Clement's life, by contrast, is secure and successful. Married to a best-selling authoress of "Epic Fantasy", the only blips in his comfortable Oxford existence are his wife's affairs. The closer Clement comes to understanding his brother, the less he knows about himself.

## BEST-SELLERS

The value of TV tie-ins to book sales is underlined this week by the arrival in the non-fiction top 10 of *Making Friends in the UK*. Published in November, its sales figures soared from number 38 to number 10 after the much-hyped wedding episode of this US sitcom screened on 11 December. Similarly, the

sales of Bill Bryson's *Notes From a Big Country* and *Notes From a Small Island* will doubtless be boosted by a six-part TV series, *Bill Bryson's Notes From a Small Island*, starting tomorrow. In the history and current affairs chart, the dominance of Dava Sobel's *Longitude* looks unshakable but, with *Millennium*

fever in the air, perhaps another chronicle of timekeeping, David Ewing Duncan's *The Calendar*, will knock it off the top spot.

Compiled by data supplied on sales over seven days ending 3 January 1999  
© Bookwatch Ltd, 1999

## ORIGINAL FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (9) Tom Clancy's Powerplays	Tom Clancy (Penguin)	4,522	£5.99
2 (-) Churchill's People	Mary Jane Staples (Corgi)	3,997	£5.99
3 (-) Miracle Cure	Michael Palmer (Arrow)	2,924	£5.99
4 (-) This United State	Colin Forbes (Macmillan)	2,088	£5.99
5 (3) City Girl	Patricia Scanlan (Bantam)	1,553	£16.99
6 (-) Ramses 5	Christian Jacq (Simon & Schuster)	1,523	£9.99
7 (2) Carpe Jugulum	Terry Pratchett (Doubleday)	1,417	£16.99
8 (5) Archangel	Robert Harris (Hutchinson)	1,362	£16.99
9 (8) Rainbow Six	Tom Clancy (M Joseph)	1,336	£16.99
10 (7) Charlotte Gray	Sebastian Faulks (Hutchinson)	1,281	£16.99

## ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (1) Delia's How to Cook	Delia Smith (BBC)	12,460	£16.99
2 (4) Little Book of Feng Shui	Lillian Too (Element)	4,279	£1.99
3 (5) The Little Book of Calm	Paul Wilson (Penguin)	3,537	£1.99
4 (-) Men are From Mars...	John Gray (Thorsons)	3,421	£8.99
5 (2) Notes From a Big Country	Bill Bryson (Doubleday)	2,264	£16.99
6 (3) The Life of Birds	David Attenborough (BBC)	1,888	£18.99
7 (-) Birthday Letters	Ted Hughes (Faber)	1,694	£14.99
8 (9) Real Food	Nigel Slater (Fourth Estate)	1,555	£18.99
9 (10) Ethel and Ernest	Raymond Briggs (Cape)	1,537	£14.99
10 (-) Making Friends in the UK	Penny Stallings (Channel 4)	1,507	£9.99

## HISTORY, POLITICS, CURRENT AFFAIRS

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 Longitude	Dava Sobel (Fourth Estate)	2,095	£5.99
2 The English	Jeremy Paxman (M Joseph)	822	£20
3 Heaven's Mirror	Graham Hancock & Sandra Fata (M Joseph)	804	£20
4 The Calendar	David Ewing Duncan (Fourth Estate)	726	£12.99
5 Stalingrad	Antony Beevor (Viking)	709	£25
6 Endurance	Caroline Alexander (Bloomsbury)	612	£20
7 Over Here	Raymond Seitz (Phoenix)	504	£7.99
8 East and West	Chris Patten (Macmillan)	490	£22.50
9 Like the Roman: Enoch Powell	Simon Heffer (Weidenfeld)	404	£25
10 To the Last Man: spring 1918	Lyn Macdonald (Viking)	399	£25

## All in a Nobel cause

Zachary Leader warms to the kind of writer who could murder a critic



Bech at Bay by John Updike

Hamish Hamilton, £16.99, 241pp

WHY WRITE? John Updike's answer, from an essay of 1978, is thoroughly Freudian: "the world, so balky and resistant and humiliating, can in the act of mimesis be rectified, adjusted, chastened, purified". Updike's comic hero, the Jewish-American novelist Henry Bech, would agree, calling art "both duplication and escape". But for Bech art is not enough. The chastening process must also be enacted, and where better to begin than with one's enemies? "I think you've shown a lot of balls, frankly," Bech's 26-year-old mistress, Robin, tells him when she discovers he's been systematically murdering the most hostile of his reviewers, "translating your resentments into action instead of sublimating them into art".

Robin herself, like this reaction, is pure wish-fulfilment. For though Bech's reputation has been quietly growing, unlike his oeuvre (three novels, two novellas, a "miscellany," a volume of "Sketches and Stories"), he is now 74. When he wins the Nobel Prize (Updike indulges all the male writer's fantasies, enumerated by Freud as "honour, power, wealth, fame and the love of women"), one thinks of Saul Bellow, whose fifth wife, Janis, is more than 40 years his junior. Bech, though, is no Bellow; or rather, as in Updike's two previous collections about him, *Bech: A Book* (1970) and *Bech Is Back* (1982), not quite Bellow; just as he's not quite Roth or Mailer or Malamud or Heller.

To begin with, he's a lot like Updike, for all the expertly observed Jewishness, even the writer's block (definitely not Updike's problem). Updike, too, is a sexy writer, and like Bech has been accused of misogyny and hatred of the body (Brother Fig, the title of the first of Bech's novellas, is "a con-

temptuous Medieval expression for the body"). He also supported, or at least refused to denounce, the Vietnam War (like Bech, "draft evasion disgusted him") and has often been labelled reactionary, memorably by Gore Vidal. The most wounding of the phrases Bech broods over from his bad reviews - "says nothing with surprising aplomb," "prose arabesques of astonishing irrelevance" - recall the critic Gary Wills, for whom Updike's writing is "stylistic solipsism". Wills and Vidal, one notes, are the only real-life critics that Bech contemplates rubbing out.

The funniest of these five linked stories is "Bech Presides", in which Henry's friend and rival Izzy Thornbush, a sort of Mailer figure (though cunningly crafted to evade precise identification), persuades him to become president of a privately endowed academy called the Forty - a cross between the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (whose centennial Festschrift Updike has just edited) and the Académie Française.

At first, Henry rather likes presiding, just as he likes the Forty's sumptuous midtown mansion in New York, with its mahogany presidential desk, its



Updike: 'indulges all the male writer's fantasies' RC White

ceremonial dinners, and its devoted female administrators. But the Forty is dying: four members have already expired; the remaining 36 are ancient; and nobody can agree on a single new member. The exhilarating spite with which Updike imagines these egomaniacs who keep nominating people who are dead or else already members is among the best things in the book.

"Bech Presides" also pleases through its artful plotting: in several senses, a virtue of the collection as a whole (which may account for its subtitle, "A Quasi-Novel"). In "Bech Pleads Guilty", Henry is sued for libel by a Hollywood agent whom he once described in print as an "arch-gonorrhea" (Bech is "at bay" partly because surrounded by such enemies). This agent is monstrous but he also reminds Bech of his dead father. As the agent's suit collapses, Bech begins to feel sorry for him, and guilty (hence the story's title).

Bech's father, a diamond dealer, was indomitable, like the agent, but Bech now also sees him as vulnerable. His death from a stroke in the subway, "under the sliding fifth of the East River," anticipates the death of Bech's first victim in "Bech Noir", the critic-killing

story, whom he pushes under the D-Train at a Sixth Avenue station. The Oedipal echoes of critic, agent, and father - blocking figures all - reverberate throughout the collection, delicately interweaving themes and plot motifs.

In the final story, "Bech and the Bounty of Sweden," Bech not only wins the Nobel Prize, to the fury and astonishment of his rivals ("Sour grapes," he tells us elsewhere, is "the champagne of the intelligentsia"), and marries the zoffig Robin, but fathers a daughter. As Bech holds this daughter, Golda, in his arms, and ascends the podium to deliver his acceptance speech, a "solemn look" on her face signals "the spicy smell of ochre babyshit".

Here, as everywhere in the collection, we are offered the twin literary pleasures of wish-fulfilment and mimesis. This is the world just as it is and just as the writer wants it.

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## COUNTRY MATTERS



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The program provides yet another vivid illustration of the difference in attitude between town and country people. The rural folk who feature are calm, slow-moving and effective; the townspeople are frenzied in their need to progress from one place to another at maximum pace. One urban driver after another complains that farm vehicles and animals are nothing but a nuisance; tiresome obstacles to be overtaken as fast as possible, rather than fellow road-users with an equal right to be on the highway. An American skillfully piloting a large van, maintains that farm machines "have no appreciation of your needs". Apart from other defects, they have "dirt on their rear" so that you can't see when the drivers are braking or indicating a turn. As for that caravan

The whole last phrase sums up the  
 That problem. Anyone who needs  
 to maintain 50mph in a hefty van  
 should not be roaring along country  
 lanes. Speed is the arch-villain and  
 arch-destroyer – as no one knows  
 better than Eleanor Hill. One sunny  
 evening she was riding her horse  
 Terrapin along a lane when she  
 heard a car approaching from be-  
 hind at tunic velocity. Before she  
 could take evasive action, she was  
 flatted on her face on the Tarmac, 20  
 yards farther on, and her horse had  
 been smashed to the ground with its  
 back and both back legs broken. She  
 has not ridden since, but, as she re-  
 marked with understandable bit-  
 terness, the man who hit her got  
 seven points on his licence and a fine  
 of £200, and is still driving around.

On New Year's morning a group

Along the way somebody asked why so much fuss is being made about the construction of new houses in the countryside. The populations of many villages, she pointed out, used to be far higher than they are now, and during the past couple of centuries, hundreds of cottages have simply disappeared with the rundown of rural employment. Why, then, worry, if new houses are built?

The answer is that country people's habits have changed entirely. In the 18th century they had no form of transport except their feet and possibly a horse and cart. They

Today their successors are constantly on the move, hurrying to work, ferrying children to school, rushing to catch a train, hurtling to the supermarket, the gym, the doctor. Everybody drives without a second thought. The result is that lanes are becoming increasingly dangerous and unpleasant, especially when commuters use them as rat-runs because main roads have become intolerably congested. Ugly new houses may disfigure villages, but it is fast-moving vehicles that make them hazardous.

The answer to the problem is not, as some authorities believe, to widen all lanes and turn them into A-roads. That would merely increase speeds still further, make life yet more perilous for locals, and remove a feature that contributes most strongly to our countryside's character. The real difficulty is to make people drive slower when the narrow and twisty nature of the road demands it. As *Rural Hell* clearly

So what can be done? More speed limits would make little difference, as they are so widely ignored. Humps in the road render life intolerable for people who have to use lanes regularly. Cameras do act as a deterrent, but they cannot monitor every lane in the country.

What about making road rage a criminal offence, for which the penalty would be permanent disqualification from driving? That at least would remove from the roads people with a congenital inability to control their temper, whether in the country or in the town.

**FEW ANIMALS** announce their mating rituals more loudly than foxes, which are once again starting their nocturnal courtship. Even in the dark it is easy to distinguish the sexes, as they give out entirely different calls.

Dog foxes patrol their territories uttering little volleys of dry, staccato barks - *roff, roff, roff* - at intervals of several minutes, and leaving marker-deposits of urine as they go. On a still night you



The vixen's cry is an unearthly scream, usually uttered when she is feuding with a competing female: the two stand on their hind legs and spar, letting off fearful imprecations. They, too, are marking their trails with frequent urination, and the allure of a female in season is powerfully magnetic. On one occasion I saw seven foxes advancing in line-ahead formation, six of them dogs after a single vixen.

After a gestation period of about 52 days, cubs will be born in underground dens, probably four or five in a litter. For their first fortnight they are blind, but thereafter they start to emerge and play round the mouth of the earth. If the mother feels that danger is threatening, she may move them to another den, carrying them one at a time by the scruff of the neck.

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## Management Consultancy and Advice


The Government also proposes to establish framework contracts with a number of organisations for the provision of management consultancy and advice related to the administration and support of maintained school education and services to pupils and parents. The required services may relate to any of the current LEA functions and will typically build on Ofsted LEA inspection reports. There will be a range of activity which could include: advising the LEA on how to address concerns highlighted by Ofsted, drawing up a specification on the basis of which the contract for the provision of education services would be drawn up; and managing contracts for service delivery.

## Next Steps

The Department is keen to hear from those interested in carrying out either or both of these types of work, including those interested in doing so for particular areas of the country or for certain functions.

For information packs containing further details of the two aspects of work involved, the contracting processes and timetables, please fax a request to 01325 392488. In accordance with EU Procurement Regulations, an advertisement for the consultancy work will also appear in the Official Journal of the European Communities and Government Opportunities.

The deadline for receipt of expressions of interest is 15 February 1999.



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'The air up here is worth sixpence a pint,' said Tennyson (pictured below en famille) of the downland that sweeps across to The Needles (above) Corbis

# Anyone for Tennyson?

Freshwater Bay on the Isle of Wight was a cultural shrine for the Victorians, who flocked here to see their poet-hero. Today, Mick Webb finds inspiration in its grey stones and winter skies

**B**reak, break, break, on thy cold grey stones, oh sea", and break it certainly did, crashing on the pebbles of Freshwater Bay, just as Alfred Lord Tennyson had commanded in his famous lines. The western end of the Isle of Wight is Tennyson country, and his legacy is but one reason for paying a winter visit here. Almost severed from the rest of the island, it is self-contained, very beautiful and, at this time of year, as quiet as a tomb. West Wight out of season. As we played dodge-the-spray on a chilly grey morning, looking forward to soup and a pint in the handily placed Albion Hotel, it was hard to imagine that this was once a literary and cultural shrine. One guidebook goes so far as to compare mid-19th-century Freshwater Bay to ancient Athens under Pericles, as eminent Victorians beat a path to Tennyson's door to share his wisdom and join his circle.

Nowadays, though, you don't need literary credentials to stay at the poet's home; it has become the Farringford Hotel, which, as well as the usual hotel rooms, has a number of self-catering suites and buildings for rent. We, a family of four, stayed in one of the "garden" cottages, which are arranged around a lawn that was once a tennis court enjoyed by the poet's sons. My own children played Frisbee and football there - we can only guess what the great man would have thought of that. He certainly wasn't keen on the influx of ordinary visitors that railway travel brought to the island.

What hasn't changed much since Tennyson's time is the broad and beautiful swath of downland that crowns the cliffs between Freshwater Bay and the Needles. "The air up here is worth sixpence a pint," the poet laureate was fond of quoting. I expect that is about £100 at today's rates, and worth every penny. And that is without counting the views, at their best from the Tennyson Monument, over the Solent to the mainland or out across the English Channel. We walked the three exhilarating miles from Freshwater Bay to the Needles, though these were a bit of a disappointment, smaller than expected, and rather more like shark's teeth than needles. The other tourist attraction of the area, Alum Bay, where my mum once filled a little glass lighthouse



with different coloured sands, is no longer a mecca for sand-collectors. Erosion has made the practice too dangerous, although there are compensations - a bit further round the coast, at Headon Warren, the crumbling cliff has created an undercliff with a kind of mini-jungle that makes for an interesting and sheltered walk with great possibilities for hide-and-seek. Or, when you have had enough ups and downs, a much flatter ramble can be had along the old railway track beside the river Yar into the pretty little port of Yarmouth. En route, there is the chance to see and almost certainly misidentify a whole variety of water

birds, which include oystercatchers and little egrets.

I am reliably informed that in summer, the sea around here is very warm and welcoming. In winter, though, the best thing to do with the sea is to watch it, ideally from behind a nice piece of glass, and West Wight is not short of this kind of facility. Apart from the Albion at Freshwater Bay, there is a pub called The Waterfront on the seafront at Totland whose long and spacious conservatory has windows facing seawards, while the Dimbola Lodge in Freshwater Bay combines a tearoom-with-a-view, a little bookshop, and a gallery given over mainly to the photographic work of Mrs Julia Margaret Cameron. She was a pioneering photographer noted for her portraits of Carlyle, Darwin, Browning and many other famous visitors to Freshwater, and she was very much part of the Tennyson set.

At this time of year, most of the leisure parks and complexes are closed, and very sad and abandoned they look. But then fun and games and late nights are not what West Wight is really about. Apart from rambling and birdwatching, you can

see glass and porcelain being made, and find out all about pearls.

After dark, the main source of entertainment is the pubs, where children are welcomed, menus are varied and portions are large. My favourite meal was at The Fat Cat on the Bay, where the proud boast is that "home-made means home-made", and the patron stocks a lethal collection of spirits - calvados, marc, sambuca, grappa... Just writing the names makes my head spin. Still, a quick walk down to Freshwater Bay soon sorts you out.

Two companies operate ferries to the Isle of Wight: Wightlink (01705 327744), from Portsmouth to Ryde and Fishbourne, and Lymington to Yarmouth, and Red Funnel (01703 227591) from Southampton to Cowes. Mick Webb travelled by Wightlink Ferries from Portsmouth to Fishbourne. The trip cost £40 for a five-day return for car with two adults and two children.

At Farringford Hotel (01983 752500), self-catering cottages cost from £30 a day (£180 a week); hotel rooms from £26 per person. For more details, call Farringford Tourist Office 01983 813818



SIMON CALDER

A US citizen who spends cash in Cuba without a licence can receive a 10-year prison sentence

"HAD WE not been the world's greatest optimists, we would not have gone on" - not the words of a passenger on Virgin Trains, but the revolutionary recollections of Fidel Castro. In Havana last night, he and I commemorated (though not together) the 40th anniversary of the triumphant arrival in the Cuban capital of his rebel army, a week after the dictator Batista had fled the country.

Cuba calls itself "The land of miracles". Besides all the true-but-clichéd wonders that you could easily come up with about the Caribbean's largest and most entrancing island, here are a few more that the traveller here may marvel at: that it is possible to weld together several hits of Lada saloons to create a stretched limousine in this last bastion of Marxism-Leninism; that the last country to join the Soviet bloc has survived the collapse of all its ideological soulmates; and that it took until this week for the United States to begin to ease the ineffectual economic stranglehold on Cuba, whose main victims have been its Cuban citizens.

British travellers are more fortunate than we often realise. For a start, anyone deciding to depart the UK by sea can get a passport within weeks - and a heavily subsidised ticket across the Channel. Those who hope to leave Cuba across the Florida Straits have missed the raft, risking life and limb on the treacherous stretch of water to Key West no longer automatically results in US citizenship. We are luckier, too, than the average American, who is banned from travelling to the closest overseas country by order of his or her own government. Anyone who spends cash in Cuba without previously obtaining a special licence is liable to receive a 10-year prison sentence.

This week, a beleaguered Bill Clinton agreed to increase the number of flights between Miami and Havana. For a decade, these have been known as ghost flights; unlike almost any other flight in the world, they cannot be booked direct with the airline and instead you are told to turn up at a distant corner of Miami airport with a wad of cash. I have tried this, and it works, though a return fare of £150 for a half-hour flight is extortionate.

Before being allowed to board, British travellers have to sign a piece of paper to promise not to be Americans. The airlines that have benefited from this curious arrangement include Mexicana and Haitian TransAir, brought in as uncontentious third-party carriers - the island's national

airline, Cubana, being *planea non gratae*. Now, though, the skies over Havana are alive with the sight of United Airlines jets, with other US carriers set to follow.

For British travellers, the long-term benefit is likely to mean much easier access to Cuba. A two-centre holiday combining thrilling-but-artificial Florida fun parks with the intense and entirely human excitement of Cuba sounds logical, but for the last four decades such a trip has been inadmissible. When (or, perhaps, should) be a very big "if" Fidel Castro celebrates his half-century in charge, Britain's biggest tour operator to Florida - Virgin Holidays - will be offering Mickey Mouse-meets-Marxism vacations. But perhaps I'm being too optimistic.

HAVANA WAS the place where the International Air Transport Association was founded; in 1945, as the world emerged from war, the airlines gathered at the Hotel Nacional to form a cartel. Such is the state of the Cuban economy that many of the aircraft in the island look as though they were around to ferry the original delegates.

Yet just as the lumbering old pre-Revolutionary Buicks and Cadillacs have bestowed chic on the Cuban capital, so, too, has the ageing fleet of aircraft acquired a certain appeal to tourists. The Aerotaxi enterprise does not hire out executive jets; instead, it operates a fleet of single-engine Soviet biplanes. Places on these aircraft are popular with day-tripping tourists, who arrived on aircraft equipped with the latest "fly-by-wire" technology and wish to experience some "retro" "fly-with-wire" aviation. These eight-seaters fly in formation, and the sight of five of them taking off in sequence is remarkable. If you prefer a bit more comfort (but not much), you may be pleased to learn that the authorities have decided to upgrade their tourist fleet by purchasing a DC-8 for use on day trips.

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## A Cruise of Venice & The Lagoon

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Venice is on everyone's list to visit at least once during a lifetime which probably explains the high prices of accommodation, not to mention the price of a cup of coffee or a meal. Then, having got there, there is the expense of getting around which normally results in the visitor seeing just a fraction of what there is to see in the time allowed. During the months January to April we shall be operating a series of short cruises on the Swiss-managed vessels MS Venezia and MS Viking Bordeaux which will be our base for visiting Venice itself, the islands of Burano and Torcello, and across the lagoon to the ancient port town of Chioggia. The tariff includes return flights from London, transfers and cruise, full board, accommodation in an outside facing cabin with en suite facilities, UK departure tax and services of a knowledgeable local guide. January to April are ideal months to visit Venice, away from the crowds of summer, with the visitor thus being permitted time and space in stand and gaze and marvel at it all.

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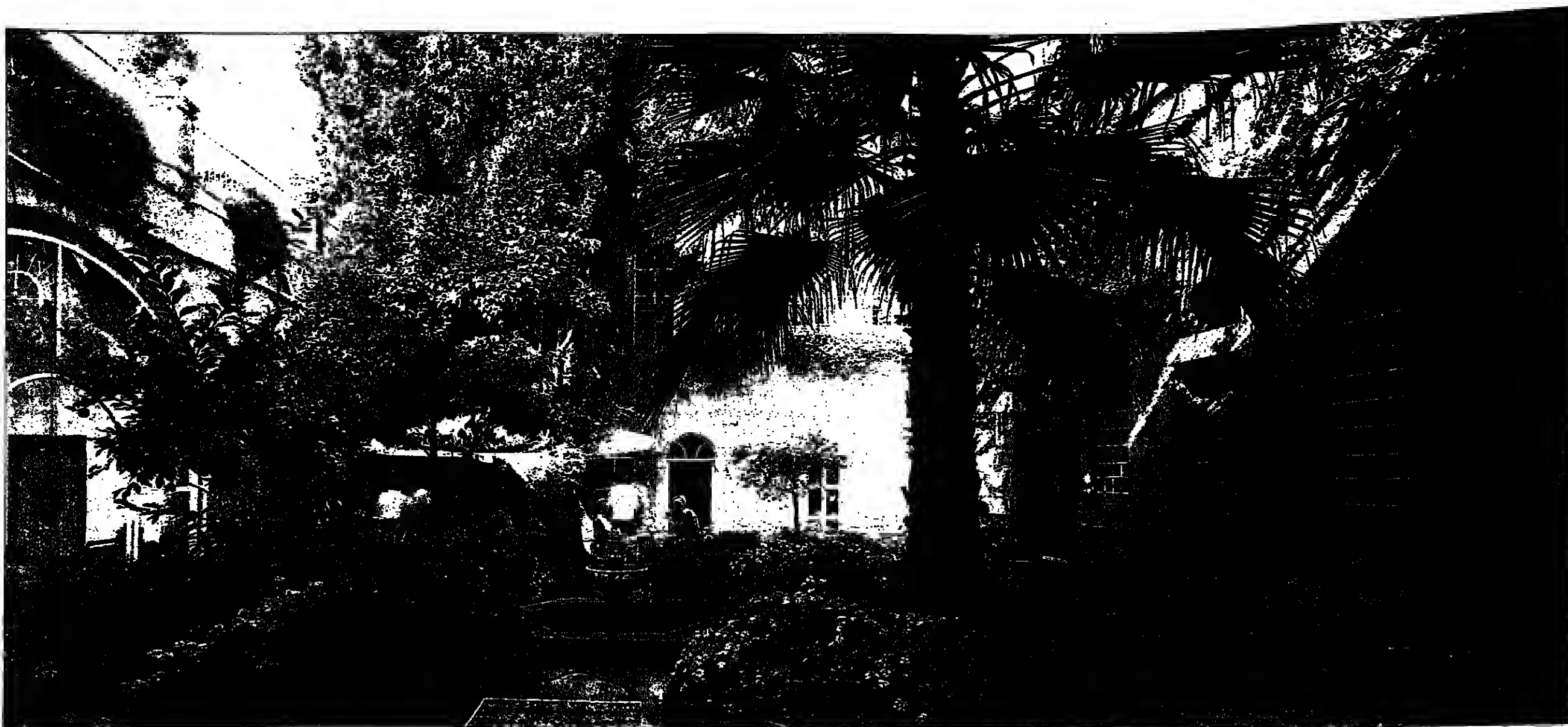
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AFRICA'S WARMEST WELCOME

## An oasis of calm in a stormy city

If you're going to Jerusalem, there's really only one place to stay – a luxury hotel with a unique history. By Cathy Packe

No city in the world arouses such emotion as Jerusalem. Judaism and Islam reside uneasily with various strains of Christianity, while Israelis and Palestinians jostle for living space. According to the travel advice from the Foreign Office, the location has been too risky for British visitors on at least two recent occasions – hundreds of holiday-makers were brought home early just before Christmas. Currently, however, the advice is that British nationals visiting Israel should simply "keep in touch with developments". Which means, for the time being at least, that Jerusalem is back on the visitor's map. And, of course, it's an intensely rewarding destination – especially if you stay in the city's prime location.

The American Colony is a luxury hotel that has retained the atmosphere of a family home. It is, and always has been, neutral territory, and people on different sides of the religious and political argument have traditionally used it as a place to meet and express their views freely.

The original American colony was the family of Horatio Spafford, a church elder from Chicago. He and his wife were blamed when five of their six children died. Driven out of their community, they went to Jerusalem in search of spiritual peace, accompanied by several other members of the church. The group settled in the Old City in 1881 and kept open house, a tradition their descendants still foster in the hotel. When they were joined by sympathisers from Sweden, they

moved out into what was then still countryside, where they bought the house of the local Ottoman governor, or pasha. It was this building, with neighbouring houses added later, that eventually became the American Colony Hotel.

The pasha lived in luxury with his four wives, each of whom had two rooms of her own, one on the ground floor for summer, and another on the warmer first floor for winter. Despite extensive renovations, all the rooms have their original vaulting and arched windows, and other details, including the 19th-century tiles and painted ceilings, have been preserved.

The place now known as the Pasha's Room was where he received visitors. There are arches in the middle, a beautiful painted ceiling and large windows that open out on to a large terrace. In summer this is covered with a bedouin-style tent, and cushions are strewn on the floor. It is a wonderful place to sit and read, or simply to contemplate life.

The pasha's lifestyle was the complete opposite of that led by the Spaffords and their community, who moved in and became self-sufficient, setting up small businesses which served the local area. The community was run along the lines of a modern kibbutz, long before that movement started, and it became known as the American Colony.

A hundred years later, the hotel is a wonderful haven. The food is home-cooked, a considerable attraction in a country not renowned for its culinary charms. The pool is designed to catch the sun for large parts of the day: it has a big terrace area, and the

discreet waiters seem to know automatically when you may like a freshly-squeezed orange juice, or something stronger.

Given such pleasant surroundings, it is hard to tear yourself away to visit the city. An office opposite the hotel's main entrance can organise chauffeur-driven cars and taxis, but the hotel is only a short walk from the walls of the Old City and the Damascus Gate. You will pass close to the Garden Tomb, which according to myth was where the body of Christ was buried. Continuing due south down the Nablus Road you will soon reach the bustling area around the Damascus Gate. It is usually possible to walk along part of the ramparts, although, of course, the political situation makes everything in Jerusalem liable to sudden

change... except, that is, the American Colony Hotel.

The American Colony Hotel (00 9722 6279777). Prices start at £87 for a single room, and £115 for a double.

El Al (0171-957 4100) flies to Tel Aviv airport scheduled from Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester to Tel Aviv; British Airways (0345 222111) has services from Gatwick and Heathrow. Charter flights from London and Manchester to Tel Aviv are widely available for around £200, through agents such as Pullman Holidays (0171-630 5111). From the airport, take a bus or taxi (journey time of one hour) to Jerusalem. More information: Israel Government Tourist Office, 180 Oxford Street, London W1N 9DJ (0171-299 1111)



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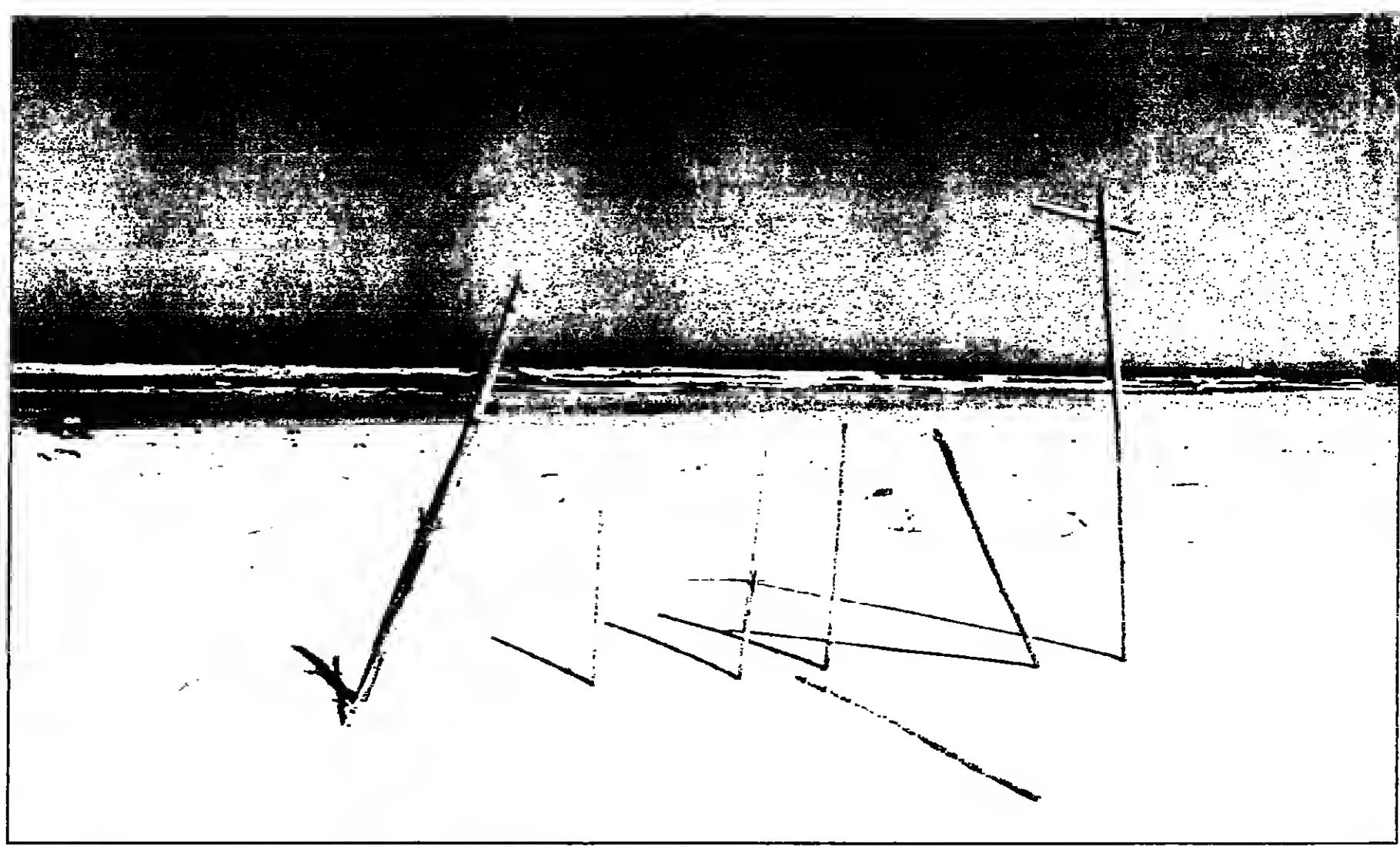
# Cape of good times

The south-western tip of Portugal offers an intriguing base to explore the Algarve. By James Von Leyden

At the tip of the Algarve, on the south-western extremity of continental Europe, lies Cabo de Sao Vicente. For the Romans, this windswept promontory marked the limit of the known world. It was a sacred spot, the Promontorium Sacrum, where the sun sank into the ocean each night in a blazing fireball. In 1797 the cape marked the site of a decisive sea battle between Britain and Spain.

These days, two rather different horizons converge on Cape St Vincent. From the east, from their high-rise apartments in Albufeira, package tourists come to peer over the headland and eat hot dogs under the sign 'Letze bratwurst vor Amerika'. From the north come surfers - tattooed road warriors heading down from the beaches of Oldeceice, Arrifana and Carrapateira.

Sagres, where the coaches and camper vans meet, is a bustling one-horse town. Its 15th-century school



The beach at Carrapateira is one of the most dramatic - and deserted - in Europe

James Von Leyden

of navigation once attracted cartographers, mariners and astronomers. Here shipwrights designed the caravelles, the revolutionary three-masted ships that took Magellan and Vasco da Gama on their voyages of exploration to Africa and India. The coastline is now protected by a national park. Take a walk along the cliffs and you'll see peregrines swooping around the cliff-face while Atlantic rollers pound the rocks.

Twenty miles north of Sagres lies Carrapateira. Hemmed in by sand dunes and buffeted by constant northerly winds, the beach of Carrapateira is one of the most dramatic and desolate in Europe. Its bracing climate discourages all but a handful of surfers, walkers and horse riders. Around the headland lie sheltered coves where you can swim and sunbathe.

Carrapateira is an excellent base to explore the hinterland. The marshy river valley is home to osprey and herons. You can walk or ride up through eucalyptus and

chestnut groves into the Serra de Monchique, a verdant mountain range which forms the northern boundary of the Algarve. Along the roadside you will see gnarled cork oaks, their trunks stripped and daubed with the date of harvesting. Although the western Algarve is an important centre of cork production, it is one of Europe's most deprived regions. Tourism has yet to make an impact here, although the European Union Development Fund has sponsored a programme of road-building in an effort to open up the interior.

An hour's drive along one such road brings you to the spa town of Caldas de Monchique. Nestling in a ravine of eucalyptus and plane trees, Caldas de Monchique has been a favoured destination for health seekers since Roman times. In the 19th century wealthy Spaniards came here to take the waters. Trails wind up from Monchique to Pico de Picota, a 770-metre rocky outcrop from where you can see Cape St Vincent, the beaches of the southern Algarve and, on an exceptionally clear day, the hills of Spain.

Getting there: Charter flights operate from several UK airports to Faro about 90 minutes' drive from the area, but in winter it may be easier to find space on a scheduled flight. British Airways (0345 222 1111) flies from Heathrow and currently has a World Offer of £160.80 for a return ticket (including tax). TAP Air Portugal (0171-828 0262) flies daily from Heathrow and is offering return fares of £157.80 (including tax) for midweek departures. While British Midland (0345 551 551) has two flights a week from East Midlands airport and has a return fare of £118.80 (with tax).

Where to stay: In Carrapateira the villa Casa Pajara (00351 82 97 123) charges £45 per night room. The three-star Albergaria Velha (00351 82 91 01 20) in Caldas de Monchique costs around £22 per night for a twin room. Between May and October, try the Albergaria Lagedo (00351 82 91 26 16) in Caldas de Monchique - it boasts an outdoor swimming pool planted with camellia and jacaranda.

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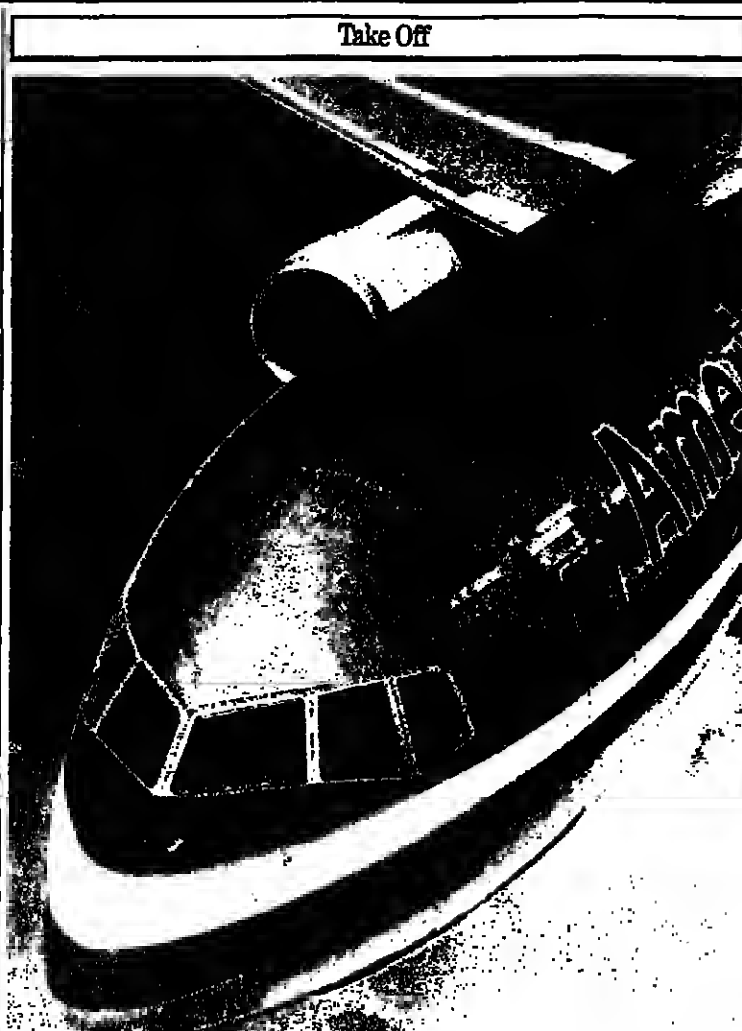


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# Escape from Avoriaz ...

An early encounter with a French snowboarder prompted Stephen Wood to explore further afield. He didn't regret it

The suggestion by the mayor of the small resort of La Bresse, in the Vosges, that gendarmes should be posted on ski slopes, made the front pages of many French newspapers last week. In a quiet period for news - and high season for skiing - mayors of resorts all over France were consulted on their views (almost unanimously negative) of the initiative, which had been prompted by four accidents in three days at La Bresse, all involving injuries and all caused by snowboarders.

To keep the story going, *Le Parisien* sent a reporter to Avoriaz, in the Portes du Soleil ski area, where he conducted a straw poll among skiers on whether the conduct of snowboarders warranted police surveillance. He quoted at length Clara Deboux, a skiessie parisienne "terrorised" by snowboarders (or surfers, as they are termed). Safety on the pistes had, she said, been reduced by the "new race known as surfers". They come from nowhere, and cut across in front of you. They are a permanent source of concern.

No doubt interviewing a skiessie parisienne was more appealing than talking to a middle-aged Londoner staying for the week in Avoriaz. But I could have given the reporter a better story, perhaps with the headline "Piste menace claims another victim".

My experience of skiing in Avoriaz was short and bitter. I set off down the narrow track - crowded with beginners - which leads to the main lift base. Towards the bottom, it has the added hazard of a pylon right in the middle. It was here, about 90 seconds after I had kicked into my bindings, that a snowboarder flew into me.

The pile of snow behind the pylon looked like a good launch-pad to him; so, hurtling down to its right, he suddenly carved a sharp left-hand turn, took off, and executed what would have been a 360-degree mid-air spin if I hadn't been minding my own business on the left-hand side of the pylon. He made it to about 270 degrees before landing on me.

Of course there's never a gendarme around when you need one and I could only explain explicitly what he was, in English and then - once I had collected myself and my ski poles - in French.

At Avoriaz, it's difficult to recover quickly from such a shock, because 30 per cent of the resort's clientele are snowboarders (thanks to its reputation for having pioneered facilities for them). When the characteristic swooshing and crunching of a snowboarder in your wake causes apprehension and anxiety, Avoriaz is no place to be, and in my dark mood, the drawbacks of the place multiplied. It was hellishly crowded, for a start (not the resort's fault but mine, for going there between Christmas and the new year); the piste map was the worst I have ever come across; and the purpose-built mid-Sixties resort, with its jagged, timber-faced apartment towers, looked as if it had been designed by a matchstick-model maker.

The list of complaints might have grown longer, but I did not ski in Avoriaz again. Because one of its virtues is that it is so easy to leave - from Avoriaz it is possible to ski to nine of the other resorts in the Portes du Soleil area, a great loop of skiing, crossing several valleys plus the border between Switzerland and France, and offering 650km of pistes and 212 lifts.

The commuter traffic within the Portes du Soleil is predominantly made up of skiers heading into Avoriaz, which is the highest and most snow-sure resort with the most challenging skiing. But, going in the opposite direction, I had a choice of destinations. I plumped for the small, family resort of Les Gets.

An easy, 25-minute trip by road, the journey on skis from Avoriaz to Les Gets is one of the most complicated links in the Portes du Soleil, involving five lifts and one surface transfer across Morzine.

The skiing at Les Gets, split into three areas, is much softer than that of Avoriaz. But it was just what I wanted: quiet, with short lift queues, plenty of room on the pistes, and mercifully few snowboarders. On the western side of the village is a largish, open ski area running down from the Mont Chéry ridge, on which there is a superb Alpine panorama, the peaks including Mont Blanc to the south east, all identified on a circular orientation table. Beyond it a red run sweeps down into the next valley, with a jolly, heavily moguled black piste running alongside.

To the west is the main ski area, mainly red runs including a few woodland adventures but with some nursery slopes set high above the village. Finally, there are the wooded slopes beyond the Fléney ridge, from which blues and reds run down to Morzine, on the route back to Avoriaz.

I have reason to be grateful for that snowboarding hooligan at Avoriaz: if our paths had not crossed, I would probably not have skied at Les Gets. But I shall be grateful, too, if he and his buddies are back at school when I next venture to Avoriaz. Because then I'll be able to enjoy its skiing, and have a crack at the legendary black run, the "Wall" of Chavanette. I do prefer to create my own disasters rather than have them visited upon me by flying snowboarders.



The village resort of Les Gets offers softer - and less hazardous - skiing than more popular Avoriaz. *Scottish Daily Record*

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## NEW FILMS

## LITTLE VOICE (15)

Director: Mark Herman  
Starring: Jane Horrocks, Michael Caine  
Holed up in her bedroom, timid North Country sparrow LV (Jane Horrocks) perfects strident Shirley Bassey/Judy Garland impersonations, then falls in with Michael Caine's impresario: a low-rent, Bermuda-shirted hustler. Where Mark Herman's last film, *Brassed Off*, was a whole and solid effort, *Little Voice* proves altogether more bitty and piecemeal. Bracing black comedy, Horrocks's vocal pyrotechnics, plus a marvellously weighted turn from the rejuvenated Caine push it through to the final curtain.

Countrywide

TC (15)

Director: Darren Aronofsky  
Starring: Sean Gullette, Mark Margolis  
Aronofsky's pungent debut idles in a kind of ante-room between mellow and art class, as Sean Gullette's New York lumber-cruncher ponders a numerical code behind the holy Hebrew texts. What sustains *π* is the pure-blood ingenuity of its central conceit, its ongoing "mathematics is the language of nature" mantra. It all adds up.

Limited release

## PSYCHO (15)

Director: Gus Van Sant  
Starring: Vince Vaughn, Anne Heche  
Homage or sacrilege? Whichever camp you fall into, Gus Van Sant's shot-by-shot Psycho reconstruction is a bizarre undertaking. Hefty Vince Vaughn stands in for twitchy Anthony Perkins, Anne Heche for Janet Leigh, and Julianne Moore for Vera Miles. In the meantime, Van Sant simply runs through a karaoke cover-version of the Hitchcock classic. File this one under "White Elephants".

Countrywide

## THE SIEGE (15)

Director: Edward Zwick  
Starring: Denzel Washington, Bruce Willis  
A rare Hollywood attempt to get to grips with contemporary geopolitics, *The Siege* winds up a hopelessly fingers-and-thumbs affair. The nominal hero (Muslim terrorist bombing in New York) gets draped with all manner of garbled goings-on as Denzel Washington's FBI man rubs shoulders with Bruce Willis's gung-bo army renegade.

Countrywide

Xan Brooks

## THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

## THE THREE BEST FILMS



Out of Sight (15)

Steve Soderbergh's tale of love on opposite sides of the law knocks spots off previous Elmore Leonard adaptations, and boasts in Jennifer Lopez and George Clooney the swooniest cinematic pairing of the year.

## The Acid House (18)

A trio of interrelated shorts (left) culled from the stories of Irvine Welsh. Debut director Paul McGuigan turns this into a bit of a triumph, adapting his style well to the shifting landscape of Welsh's tales. A cracker, all told.

## Mulan (U)

In Disney's animated tale, a girl disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from certain death in combat. This movie has it all, and is one of the most visually innovative films that Disney has ever made.

XAN BROOKS AND ANTHONY QUINN

## THE THREE BEST PLAYS

## Arabian Nights

The Young Vic  
Another rich Young Vic Christmas feast (right) attaches jump-leads to the avid audience's imagination. To 23 Jan

## Just Not Fair

Birmingham Rep  
Moving account by Jim Robinson of 18 years' wretched imprisonment of the Bridgewater Four. Will be performed in rep with Wilde's equivalent prison testament, *De Profundis*. To 30 Jan

## Present Laughter

West Yorkshire Playhouse  
Ian McKellen does the Noël Coward dressing-gown and gives a scintillating, high-energy performance in this enjoyable production. To 23 Jan

PAUL TAYLOR

## GENERAL RELEASE

## THE ACID HOUSE (18)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

## ANTZ (PG)

Surely the most unlikely Woody Allen movie we will ever see. The nerd icon allegedly re-wrote the bulk of his dialogue to provide the voice of worker-ant "Z" who falls in love with the regal Princess Bala (Sharon Stone).

## THE APPLE (S18) (PG)

Seventeen-year-old Samirah Makhmalbaf's precocious debut stages a true-life recreation of the fortunes of Iran's Naderi sisters. This is a luminous missive from a burgeoning Iranian film scene.

## BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

In the follow-up to *Babe*, the hapless "sheep-pig" finds himself looking after strays in the city. Knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale.

## THE BOYS (18)

Out of jail after serving time for GBH, oldest "boy" Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home. Potent, predatory stuff.

## DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)

This Ireland-set saga is given a backbone by Meryl Streep's regal performance.

## ELIZABETH (15)

In his follow-up to *Bandit Queen*, Shekhar Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty.

## THE EXORCIST (25TH ANNIVERSARY RERELEASE) (18)

Pulled into the light, Friedkin's seminal horror is still efficiently terrifying.

## LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy falls into the former category; but Hatched Harry, to whom he owes £500,000, is a dangerous old-school pro.

## THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)

This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder.

## THE MIGHTY (PG)

Peter Chelsom's film is a tale of two outcast kids in a storybook Cincinnati. Stolid and a tad predictable, though there's a glimmer of soul showing through.

## MULAN (U)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

## MY NAME IS JOE (15)

Ken Loach's solid social-realist drama tells the tale of Joe (Peter Mullan), a recovering alcoholic torn between his old life and his new (a romance with Louise Goodall's health visitor). *My Name is Joe* brilliantly spotlights the unvarnished ambitions of a Britain caught below the poverty line.

## THE NEGOTIATOR (15)

Sammie L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in F Gary Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for swearing that sounds quite uneasy in the mouths of such articulate, rhetorical performers.

## OUT OF SIGHT (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

## THE PARENT TRAP (PG)

*The Parent Trap* catches Disney re-heating its 1961 heart-warmer into a spry, cross-cultural caper.

## THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)

Sublime cinema. George Cukor's movie has a strange and melancholy heart and Katherine Hepburn's unsatisfied heiress sheds real tears.

## THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)

Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged his cartoon life of Moses, "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean".

## RONIN (15)

John Frankenheimer's 40 years as a feature director lend an air of knackered resignation to this tired espionage thriller about a gang of mercenaries.

## RUSH HOUR (15)

Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker star in this action movie which has been a big box-office hit.

## SITCOM (18)

In this scattergun satire of middle-class mores,

Fraoçois Ozon takes abundant pleasure in dismantling a standard nuclear family.

## STAR TREK: INSURRECTION (PG)

A belated Christmas gift for Trekkies the land over, *Insurrection* bits the cinemas stuffed with in-the-know gags and is wrapped up in more cornball romance than we're used to.

## TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (PG)

This movie has come to be more highly regarded for its history than its narrative content. Conceived as a *Casablanca* cash-in, and adapted from what Hawks reckoned to be Hemingway's worst novel, this wartime drama is credited with getting Bogart (then an unhappily married megastar) together with 19-year-old Bacall. The taut, proficient plot has Bogart's Martinique-based skipper sandwiched between the Vichy government and the Free French resistance. Hawks directs with a pointed, easy grace.

## WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (15)

Robin Williams perfects a lopsided simper as the dead chappie who lights out to a cod-Impressionist heaven, before jetting off to rescue his suicide-bride.

CINEMA  
COUNTRYWIDE

## ABERDEEN

ODEON (08705-050007): Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15); The Siege (15); Enemy of the State (15); Little Voice (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

VIRGIN CINEMA (0541-202050): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); Psycho (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Little Voice (15); The Acid House (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Siege (15); What Dreams May Come (15)

## BIRMINGHAM

MAC (0121-440 3838): Henry Fool (18); My Name Is Joe (15); Character (Karaoke) (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): Rush Hour (15); Antz (PG); Mulan (U); Little Voice (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Rerelease) (18); The Mask of Zorro (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); Psycho (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Siege (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ARCADIAN CENTRE VIRGIN CINEMA (0541-555177): The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Siege (15); Antz (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Rush Hour (15); Little Voice (15); What Dreams May Come (15)

GREAT PARK VIRGIN CINEMA (0121-453 0465): Out of Sight (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Siege (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Batman Forever (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); What Dreams May Come (15); Psycho (15); Blade (18); The Parent Trap (PG); The Negotiator (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

BLACKPOOL  
ABC CHURCH STREET (01253-24233): The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Psycho (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): Babe: Pig in the City (U); What Dreams May Come (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); Rush Hour (15); Psycho (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Blade (18); The Siege (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG)

BOLTON  
BOLTON VIRGIN MEGAPLEX (Valley Central) (0870-907 0714): Space Jam (U); The Siege (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Blade (18); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Mulan (U); Rush Hour (15); What Dreams May Come (15); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U)

WARNER VILLAGE (01204 669884): Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Siege (15); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Little Voice (15); What Dreams May Come (15); James and the Giant Peach (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

BRADFORD  
ODEON (08705-050007): The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Enemy of the State (15); Hope Floats (PG)

CARLISLE  
CINEMA (01228-514654): The Parent Trap (PG); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Le Bossu (15); Psycho (15)

LONDSDALE CINEMAS (01228-514654): Godzilla (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Antz (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Siege (15); Titanic (12)

CLYDEBANK  
UCI (0990-888990): The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Siege (15); My Name Is Joe (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Soldier (Asian Film) (NC); Little Voice (15); The Acid House (18); What Dreams May Come (15); Psycho (15); Mulan (U); Ever After (PG); Rush Hour (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

COVENTRY  
ODEON (08705-050007): Sliding Doors (15); Enemy of the State (15); Psycho (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Little Voice (15)

DOVER  
UCI (0990-888990): Star Kid (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Elizabeth (15); Enemy of the State (15); Psycho (15); Mulan (U); The Siege (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Little Voice (15); Doli Sajak Rakhina (NC); Rush Hour (15)

DONCASTER  
ODEON (08705-050007): The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Mulan (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); Enemy of the State (15); Titanic (12)

WARNER VILLAGE (01302-371371): Rush Hour (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); What Dreams May Come (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); James and the Giant Peach (U); The Siege (15); Antz (PG)

DUNDEE  
ODEON (08705-050007): Mulan (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Psycho (15); Rush Hour (15); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Siege (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

EDINBURGH  
ABC FILM CENTRE (0131-228 1638): The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Psycho (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ABC WESTER HAVES (0131-442 2200): The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Siege (15); Little Voice (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Acid House (18); Antz (PG); Psycho (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U)

CAMEO (0131-228 4141): Out of Sight (15); Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); The Acid House (18); The Fisher King (15); π (PG); Twelve Monkeys (15); Buffalo 66 (15); My Name Is Joe (15)

DOMINION (0131-447 4771): Little Voice (15); There's Something About Mary (15); Antz (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Siege (15); The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Grease (20th Anniversary Edition) (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U)

UCI (0990-888990): The Siege (15); Antz (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Psycho (15); What Dreams May Come (15); Little Voice (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Rush Hour (15); Mulan (U); The Mighty (PG); The Acid House (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); Kudrat (PG)

GLASGOW  
ABC CLARKSTON ROAD (0141-637 2641): Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ABC SAUGHALL ST (0141-332 1592): The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Psycho (15); What Dreams May Come (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

THE BOMBAY CINEMA (0141-419 0722): Kudrat (PG); Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (PG)

CALEDONIAN GROSVENOR (0141-339 4298): Small Soldiers (PG); Psycho (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Siege (15); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Little Voice (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

SPRINGFIELD QUAY (08705-050007): The Acid House (18); The Mighty (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); My Name Is Joe (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Psycho (15); What Dreams May Come (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Out of Sight (15); Rush Hour (15); The Siege (15); Small Soldiers (PG)

VIRGIN FORGE PARKHEAD (0541-555136): The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); The Siege (15); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); James and the Giant Peach (U); The Siege (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15)

GRIMSBY  
ABC CINEMA (01472-342878): Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Good Burger (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

HUDDESFIELD  
UCI HUDDESFIELD (0990 888990): Ever After (PG); Prem Aggan (NC); The Siege (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Rush Hour (15); Little Voice (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Saving Private Ryan (15); Antz (PG)

HULL  
ODEON (08705-050007): What Dreams May Come (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Flubber (U); Little Voice (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Siege (15); Dr Doolittle (PG); Antz (PG); Psycho (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Rush Hour (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Mulan (U)

UCI 8 ST ANDREWS QUAY (0990-888990): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15); The Siege (15); What Dreams May Come (15); Ever After (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Rush Hour (15); Antz (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Weir (PG); The Siege (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

INVERNESS  
CALEDONIAN CINEMAS (01463-233302): The Siege (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Miracle On 34th Street (1994 Version) (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

EDEN COURT THEATRE (01463-234274): Henry Fool (18); Le Vie de Jésus (The Life of Jesus) (NC); The Secret Garden (U); My Name Is Joe (15); Way Out West & The Music Box (U); The Secret Garden (U)

WARNER VILLAGE (01463-71147): Psycho (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Enemy of the State (15); What Dreams May Come (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); James and the Giant Peach (U)

KILMARNOCK  
ABC (01563-525234): The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Enemy of the State (15)

ODEON KILMARNOCK (08705-050007): Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Acid House (18); Mulan (U); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Little Voice (15); A Goofy Movie (U); Psycho (15); The Siege (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

LEEDS  
ABC CINEMA (0113-245 2865): Rush Hour (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG)

COTTAGE ROAD CINEMA (0113-230 2562): Little Voice (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U)

HYDE PARK (0113-275 2045): Slums of Beverly Hills (15); Funny Games (18); Vertigo (PG)

LOUNGE (0113-230 2562): The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); Little Voice (15); Enemy of the State (15); Girls' Night Out (NC); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

WARNER VILLAGE (0113-279 9855): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); Psycho (15); James and the Giant Peach (U); Enemy of the State (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Psycho (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); The Siege (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U)

LEICESTER  
ABC FREEMANS PARK (08705-050007): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Saving Private Ryan (15); Lost in Space (PG); Godzilla (PG); Out of Sight (15); What Dreams May Come (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Little Voice (15); Toy Story (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); Flubber (U); Antz (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15)

WARNER VILLAGE (0116-282 7733): What Dreams May Come (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Siege (15); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15)

LIVERPOOL  
ABC ALLERTON (0151-724 3550): Anastasia (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15)

PLAZA (0151-474 4076): Zero Effect (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

VIRGIN CINEMA (0541-555146): Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Little Voice (15); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

WOOLTON PICTURE HOUSE (0151-428 1919): The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

MANCHESTER  
ARENA SEVEN CINEMAS (0161-839 0700): Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Siege (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Psycho (15); Enemy of the State (15)

CINECITY (0161-445 8181): The Prince of Egypt (U); Enemy of the State (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Little Voice (15); Enemy of the State (15); Out of Sight (15); The Siege (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

UCI TRAFFORD CENTRE (0870-603 4567): The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Saving Private Ryan (15); Psycho (15); Weir (PG); Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Blade (18); Jhoole Bole Kawa Kaate (NC); The Mighty (PG); Elizabeth (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Mulan (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Dil To Pagal Hai (PG); Kudrat (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Siege (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); Out of Sight (15); Little Voice (15); There's Something About Mary (15); What Dreams May Come (15)

MIDDLEBROUGH  
ODEON (08705-050007): The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Little Voice (15); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); The Siege (15); Enemy of the State (15)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
ODEON (08705-050007): Hope Floats (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Siege (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Little Voice (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

WARNER VILLAGE (0191-221 0222): Psycho (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Star Trek: Insurrection (PG); Little Voice (15); Rush Hour (15); The Parent Trap (PG); What Dreams May Come (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG); The Siege (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG)

NORTHAMPTON  
THE RUM CINEMA (01604-401006): The Governor (15); Saving Private Ryan (15)







## THURSDAY TELEVISION

## BBC1

- 6.00 Business Breakfast** (7008). 7.00 News (T) (63375). 8.00 Kary (S) (T) (6676337). 9.45 The Vanessa Show (S) (T) (6048207). 10.55 News (T) (7958007). 11.00 Real Rooms (S) (7952578). 11.25 Carri Cook, Wort Cook (S) (T) (7958337). 11.58 News (T) (117733). 12.00 Call My Bluff (S) (21066). 12.30 Battersea Dogs Home (S) (T) (89578). 1.00 News (T) (62482). 1.30 Regional News (6669337). 1.40 Neighbours (S) (T) (6338953). 2.05 Inside (R) (767267). 2.55 Going for a Song (S) (6567823). 3.20 The Weather Show (S) (T) (2985733).
- 3.25 Children's BBC:** Playdays (4227022). 3.45 The Littlest Pet Shop (S) (9074085). 3.55 Pocket Dragon Adventures (S) (T) (6070269). 4.05 Rugs (S) (T) (6337355). 4.20 Home Farm Twins (S) (6358449). 4.35 Short Change (S) (T) (631263). 5.00 Newsround (S) (T) (478989). 5.40 See How They Run (S) (T) (650153).
- 5.35 Neighbours** (S) (T) (282578).
- 6.00 News: Weather** (T) (51).
- 6.30 Regional News** (T) (51).
- 7.00 Watchdog** (S) (T) (238).
- 7.30 EastEnders** (S) (T) (375).
- 8.00 Vets in Practice** (S) (T) (7608).
- 8.30 Fat Free.** More about people's battles to get rid of extra pounds (S) (6443).
- 9.00 News: Weather** (T) (7207).
- 9.30 FILM Shine** (1996). Geoffrey Rush is outstanding as pianist David Helfgott, the Australian child prodigy. Noah Taylor plays the young Helfgott. Armin Mueller-Stahl plays his tormented father (S) (T) (831443).
- 11.55 Question Time** (S) (T) (765240). 12.15 Faces of Islam (S) (T) (667019).
- 12.35 FILM Man on Fire** (1987). Scott Glenn is hired to babysit a young kidnaper (S) (443271).
- 2.05 News 24** (74382592). 5.40 Faces of Islam (S) (T) (3753592). To 6.30am.

## BBC2

- 6.35 The Passionate Statistician** (T) (494086). 7.00 Open a Door (R) (297135). 7.05 Teletubbies (293472). 7.30 Yogi's Treasure Hunt (R) (689004). 7.55 Blue Peter (S) (T) (221056). 8.45 Taz-Mania (654977). 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts (S) (T) (648207). 9.00 Fiddley Fiddle Bird (R) (S) (618591). 9.00 Job Bank (S) (705482). 9.00 Belief Job (488827). 9.30 Watch (S) (625558). 9.45 Come Outside (S) (624874). 10.00 Teletubbies (R) (S) (23058). 10.30 Storytime (S) (685958). 10.45 The Experimenter (S) (617333). 11.05 Space Ark (S) (686443). 11.15 Zog Zag (S) (485977). 11.35 Lifeschool (S) (602627). 12.00 Job Bank (S) (T) (633578). 12.30 English File (S) (T) (497426). 12.30 Working Lunch (70820). 1.00 Fiddley Fiddle Bird (R) (S) (7367088). 1.40 The Arts and Crafts Hour (S) (T) (6358449). 2.10 Sporting Greats (S) (221820). 2.40 News (T) (685908). 2.45 Westminster (S) (T) (257484). 3.25 News (2985648). 3.30 Hot Shots (R) (S) (T) (643848).
- 3.40 FILM Song of Norway** (1970). Toril Maurstad plays Edward Grieg in this biopic (6574037).
- 6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation.** Sci-fi drama series (R) (S) (T) (71240).
- 6.45 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.** Sci-fi drama series (S) (T) (698977).
- 7.30 First Sight.** Current affairs (S) (T).
- 7.40 The Travel Show** (S) (T) (6578).
- 8.30 Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines** (R) (S) (T) (7085).
- 9.00 Meet the Ancestors.** An excavation team find a Roman coffin (S) (T) (5848).
- 9.30 CHOICE Fat Files - a Horizon Trilogy.** See Choice, below (S) (T) (68846).
- 10.20 Meetings with Remarkable Trees** (S) (78553).
- 10.30 Newsnight** (T) (77774). 11.15 Late Review (77307). 12.00 Despatch Box (S) (T) (6757). 12.30 Learning Zone (4665134). To 6.30am.

## ITV Granada

- 6.00 GMTV** (6791462). 9.25 Trisha (S) (T) (655733). 10.30 This Morning (S) (652582). 12.20 Granada News (T) (682559). 12.30 News (T) (74646). 1.00 Home and Away (S) (T) (655937). 1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (S) (T) (648528). 2.45 Emmerdale (R) (S) (T) (602435). 2.45 Dale's Supermarket Sweep (S) (T) (637608). 3.45 News (T) (293328). 3.50 Granada News (T) (298380).
- 3.25 Children's ITV:** Mopatop's Shop (T) (627344). 3.45 The Adventures of Dawdle (S) (422846). 4.45 The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (T) (640282). 4.00 Lavender Castle (T) (632153). 4.15 Hey Arnold! (633676). 4.40 The Worst Witch (S) (T) (707655). 5.40 Home and Away (S) (T) (655937). 5.40 News: Weather (T) (432840).
- 5.55 Granada Tonight** (T) (625773).
- 7.00 Emmerdale** Kathy delivers some surprising evidence (S) (T) (6356).
- 7.30 We Can Work It Out.** Consumer affairs magazine (S) (443).
- 8.00 The Bill.** In the world of Turkish gambling, an undercover officer goes missing. For Meadows, it is a race against time (T) (7785).
- 9.00 The Knock.** The courier with a bodyload of nuclear material returns to the UK dangerously ill with radiation burns. Fearing he will talk, Taylor orders him killed (S) (T) (7559).
- 10.00 News: Weather** (T) (4018).
- 10.30 Granada News** (T) (28397).
- 10.40 Thursday Night Live.** Live debate show (S) (615004).
- 12.00 Public Morals** (522592). 12.45 The Jerry Springer Show (752853). 1.30 Prime Time (755973). 1.55 Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (653897). 2.45 ITV at the Balford Festival (902757). 3.40 Cybernet (3497589). 3.40 Fortnightly Pats (420345). 4.05 Soundtrack (S) (2854305). 4.20 TV Nightscreen (67015). 5.30 News (67812). To 6.30am.

## Channel 4

- 7.00 The Big Breakfast** (S) (62085). 9.00 Schools (38175). 11.30 Powerhouse (1882). 12.00 Sesame Street (47004). 12.30 The Ocean World of John Stammers (7228). 1.00 Pet Rescue (R) (S) (T) (3776). 1.30 Roots to Success (633397).
- 1.55 FILM Way of a Gaucho** (1952). Rory Calhoun plots around the Pampas in this colorful caper (633288).
- 3.30 Hampton Court Palace** (T) (337). 4.00 Fifteen to One (S) (T) (72). 4.30 Countdown (S) (T) (68508). 4.55 Ricki Lake (S) (T) (473608).
- 5.30 Pet Rescue** (S) (T) (608).
- 6.00 Dishes.** Game show (T) (648).
- 6.30 Hollyoaks** (S) (T) (801).
- 7.00 News: Weather** (S) (T) (737240).
- 7.50 Gilbert and Sullivan the Very Models.** Animation (69282).
- 8.00 Norland Nannies.** Behind-the-scenes peep at a school for nannies (646).
- 8.30 Secret Lives.** A profile of Princess Margaret (R) (S) (T) (2153).
- 9.00 Dispatches.** Current affairs (T) (801).
- 10.00 Rising Damp** (R) (T) (45733).
- 10.30 Whose Line Is It Anyway?** Improvisational game show (2453).
- 11.00 Ally McBeal** (R) (S) (T) (680849). 11.55 Oz (12553). 12.45 Vids (691057). 1.25 Feather Tale (4883370).
- 1.35 FILM Stan and George's New Life** (1990). Quirky Australian comedy, with Paul Chubb (727889).
- 3.35 FILM Holiday on the River** (1984). Narrowing African drama (68467).
- 5.15 Right to Reply** (R) (61573). 5.45 The Pink Panther (722467). 5.50 Animal Alphabet (720209). 5.55 Sesame Street (478592). To 6.30am.

## Channel 5

- 6.00 5 News** (S) (780497). 7.00 WideWorld (R) (S) (T) (695262). 7.30 Winkles! (S) (695453). 7.55 Winkles! House (R) (695273). 8.00 Hawkazoo (R) (S) (695424). 8.30 Dapple Down Farm (R) (S) (695273). 9.00 Animal House (R) (S) (695273). 9.25 Postcards (498462). 9.30 Oprah (422269). 10.30 Sunset Beach (S) (T) (202397). 11.00 Leaza (R) (S) (T) (695273). 12.30 Family Affairs (S) (T) (695273). 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (S) (T) (695273). 1.30 The Roseanne Show (S) (T) (695273). 2.00 100 Per Cent (S) (695273). 2.30 Good Afternoon (S) (445375).
- 3.30 FILM Greased Lightning** (1977). Motoring drama with Richard Pryor, about the first, 4-cylinder, 1-cylinder ever to win a Grand National race (653506).
- 5.20 Sunset Beach** (S) (T) (608475).
- 6.00 100 Per Cent** (S) (613820).
- 6.30 Family Affairs** (S) (T) (610472).
- 7.00 5 News** (S) (626327).
- 7.30 Champions of the Wild.** A look at efforts to save the endangered sea turtle (S) (T) (610356).
- 8.00 The Pepsi Chart.** Dr Fox presents the latest sounds (S) (627375).
- 8.30 Family Confidential.** A 14-year-old boy is about to start a new school term. But as well as studying, he has to deal with his 10-month-old son (625182).
- 9.00 FILM A Strange Affair** (1995). Judith Light leaves her cheating husband. He survives a stroke and then she meets Mr Right. The tele drama with William Russ (S) (T) (221058).
- 10.50 Sex and Shopping.** The porn series looks at lesbian scenes (S) (30240).
- 11.20 The Jack Docherty Show** (S) (687085). 12.00 Live and Dangerous (S) (716748). 12.40 Prisoner: Cell Block (R) (S) (329592). 5.30 100 Per Cent (6954347). To 6.30am.

## ITV/Regions

- Anglia**  
As above except 12.30 News and 1.00 News (7207). 1.30 News and 1.40 News (7207). 1.40 News and 1.50 News (7207). 1.50 News and 2.00 News (7207). 2.00 News and 2.10 News (7207). 2.10 News and 2.20 News (7207). 2.20 News and 2.30 News (7207). 2.30 News and 2.40 News (7207). 2.40 News and 2.50 News (7207). 2.50 News and 3.00 News (7207). 3.00 News and 3.10 News (7207). 3.10 News and 3.20 News (7207). 3.20 News and 3.30 News (7207). 3.30 News and 3.40 News (7207). 3.40 News and 3.50 News (7207). 3.50 News and 4.00 News (7207). 4.00 News and 4.10 News (7207). 4.10 News and 4.20 News (7207). 4.20 News and 4.30 News (7207). 4.30 News and 4.40 News (7207). 4.40 News and 4.50 News (7207). 4.50 News and 5.00 News (7207). 5.00 News and 5.10 News (7207). 5.10 News and 5.20 News (7207). 5.20 News and 5.30 News (7207). 5.30 News and 5.40 News (7207). 5.40 News and 5.50 News (7207). 5.50 News and 6.00 News (7207). 6.00 News and 6.10 News (7207). 6.10 News and 6.20 News (7207). 6.20 News and 6.30 News 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ITV/Regions

BBC1

- 6.00 Business Breakfast** (20378). 7.00 News (17947). 8.00 Karyn (1805893). 9.45 The Vanessa Show (S) (187873). 10.55 News (70123). 11.00 Real Rooms (S) (701404). 11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (S) (702483). 11.55 News (1805893). 12.00 Call My Bluff (1805893). 12.30 Battersea Dogs' Home (1805893). 1.00 News (40034). 1.30 Regional News (1805893). 1.40 Neighbours (1805893). 1.45 The Weather Show (177183). 2.55 Going for a Song (1805893). 3.20 The Weather Show (S) (2034589).
- 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays** (R) (S) (71818). 3.45 The Enchanted Land (R) (S) (1805893). 3.55 Hubba (S) (1805893). 4.00 Churruks Go to the Movies (R) (S) (203783). 4.35 The Really Wild Show (S) (176072). 5.00 Newsround (S) (1550454). 5.30 See How They Run (S) (1867490).
- 5.35 Neighbours.** Lance convinces Bob to place a bet (S) (14402).
- 6.00 News: Weather** (T) (25).
- 6.30 Regional News** (T) (83).
- 7.00 Holiday.** Jil Danda tries the busy resort of Sousse in Tunisia (S) (1492).
- 7.30 Eastenders.** Emotions in the Square run high and threaten to disrupt Tiffany's funeral (S) (149473).
- 8.40 CHOICE: Holly City.** New medical drama series. See Choice, below (S) (145738).
- 9.00 News: Regional News** (T) (837).
- 9.30 Paddington Green.** Trade's still slow for wig-maker Harry (S) (13009).
- 10.00 FILM: Patriot Games** (1992). Harrison Ford stars as the CIA's Jack Ryan, making enemies of the IRA when he spots a terrorist attack in London (T) (39954).
- 11.55 FILM: Silent Motive** (1992). Patricia Wettig stars as a stalked author in this smart tele-thriller (S) (175598).
- 12.55 BBC News 24** (182474). To 6am.

BBC2

- 6.35 Wood, Brass and Baboon Bones** (1805893). 7.00 The Little Polar Bear (R) (1805893). 7.05 Teletubbies (2070928). 7.30 Yogi's Treasure Hunt (R) (2363015). 7.50 Blue Peter (S) (236783). 8.35 Taz-Mania (177273). 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts (1805893). 8.50 Oakie Doke (1805893). 9.00 German Globe (S) (732589). 9.05 Hello aus Berlin (S) (732589). 9.30 Working It Out (S) (732589). 9.35 Techno (S) (1805893). 9.45 Numberline (1805893). 10.00 Teletubbies (S) (1805893). 10.30 Watchy (S) (1805893). 10.45 Science Zone (S) (255589). 11.05 Space Ark (1772289). 11.15 Megamaths (S) (1805893). 11.35 Words and Pictures (S) (236783). 12.30 English Express (S) (1805893). 12.35 Working Lunch (1805893). 1.00 Oakie Doke (R) (S) (732589). 1.30 The Arts and Crafts Hour (S) (255589). 2.30 Sporting Greats (2225268). 2.40 News (1805893). 2.45 Westminster (S) (1805893). 3.25 News (202402). 3.30 Birds with Tony Soper (R) (S) (1805893).
- 3.50 FILM: The Clouds Roll By** (1946). Robert Walker stars as songwriter Jerome Kern (1805893).
- 6.00 Fresh Prince of Bel Air** (1805893).
- 6.25 Heartbeat High** (S) (1805893).
- 7.30 The O Zone** (S) (1805893).
- 7.30 From the Edge** (S) (1805893).
- 8.00 University Challenge** (S) (1805893).
- 8.30 Rick Stein's Seafood Odyssey.** Stein searches for the "best fish in the world" - turbot (S) (1805893).
- 9.00 Morecambe and Wise** (T) (350183).
- 9.25 Great Railway Journeys.** Michael Portillo explores the complicated routes in a trek across the railway network of Spain (S) (1805893).
- 10.20 The Whitehall Announcement.** (S) (1805893). 10.30 Newsnight (T) (1805893). 11.55 Trial by Jury (1805893). 12.00 Despatch Box (S) (77325). 12.30 Learning Zone (1805893). To 6.35am.

ITV Granada

- 6.00 GMTV** (1805893). 9.25 Tisha (S) (1805893). 10.30 The Morning (T) (1805893). 12.30 Granada News (T) (1805893). 12.35 News: Weather (T) (1805893). 1.00 Home and Away (S) (1805893). 1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (S) (1805893). 2.30 Coronation Street (R) (1805893). 2.45 Dales Supermarket Sweep (S) (1805893). 3.45 News (T) (202244). 3.50 Granada News (T) (202657).
- 3.25 Children's ITV: Mopatop's Shop** (T) (202280). 3.35 Rosie and Jim (S) (1805893). 3.55 The Wombles (S) (1805893). 4.00 Cow and Chicken (S) (1805893). 4.25 Mike and Angelo (S) (1805893). 4.50 How I (S) (1805893). 5.00 Home and Away (S) (1805893). 5.30 News (T) (728134).
- 5.55 Granada Tonight** (T) (1805893).
- 7.00 Emmerdale.** Kim and Steve sit side by side in the dock (S) (1805893).
- 7.30 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?** Quiz show (S) (1805893).
- 8.30 Airline.** Real-life documentary series following the passengers and staff at easyJet (T) (7251).
- 9.00 Peak Practice.** Newcomer Dr Graham Evans breaths after the tragic accident at the car rally - and is then landed with a £60,000 bill for caring out the helicopter (S) (1805893).
- 10.00 News: Weather** (T) (32683).
- 10.30 Granada News** (T) (455-1).
- 10.40 Someone to Watch over Me.** A look at the rare personality disorder Munchausen syndrome by proxy, which can cause parents to injure and even kill their own children (T) (1805893).
- 11.40 The Shear Story** (1805893). 12.40 Renegades (S) (1805893). 1.25 Highlander (1805893). 3.45 Wish You Were Here...? (S) (1805893). 3.40 Football League Extra (1805893). 4.35 ITV Nightscreen (1805893). 5.30 News (1805893). To 6am.

Channel 4

- 7.00 The Big Breakfast** (S) (30657). 9.00 Schools (20229). 11.30 Powerhouse (1805893). 12.30 Sesame Street (1805893). 12.35 News: Weather (T) (1805893). 1.00 Per Rescue (R) (S) (3744). 1.30 Roots to Success (1805893).
- 1.45 FILM: Until They Sail** (1957). Sick, courtroom drama with Jean Fontaine and Paul Newman (with 750338).
- 3.30 The Hampton Court Palace** (305). 4.00 Fifteen to One (R) (S) (1805893). 4.30 Countdown (S) (1805893). 5.00 Ricki Lake (S) (1805893). 5.30 Pet Rescue (S) (1805893).
- 6.00 King of the Hill** (R) (S) (1805893).
- 6.30 Home Improvement** (T) (541).
- 7.00 News: Weather** (S) (1805893).
- 7.55 Gilbert and Sullivan: The Very Models.** Animation (243015).
- 8.00 Brookside.** Lindsey discovers Peter's true whereabouts (S) (1805893).
- 8.30 Classic Aircraft.** Stories of old aircraft surviving in new roles and of the pilots who keep them flying (T) (1805893).
- 9.00 Rats.** Award-winning film that reveals a unique perspective of life in New York by exploring the relationship between the two most successful mammals found in the city - man and rat (S) (1805893).
- 10.00 Father Ted.** (R) (S) (32675). 10.30 Bob and Margaret (1805893).
- 11.00 Short Stories** (1805893).
- 11.30 Dope Sheet** (1805893). 12.00 War Story (1805893). 12.05 Morris Jolly House of Fashion (1805893). 12.20 His Mother's Voice (1805893). 12.35 A's for Autism (1805893). 12.50 Going Equipped (1805893). 1.25 Some Protection (1805893). 1.35 Pro and Con (1805893). 1.45 Glassy Ocean (1805893).
- 1.40 FILM: Ulysses** (1967). Adaptation of James Joyce's epic novel of Dublin life starring Barbara Jefford (7593348).
- 5.55 Sesame Street** (1805893). To 7am.

Channel 5

- 6.00 5 News** (733473). 7.00 WideWorld (1805893). 7.30 Milkshake! (1805893). 7.55 Wintzies House (1805893). 8.00 Hawkazoo (1805893). 8.30 Dapple Down Farm (1805893). 9.00 Weather Front (115531). 9.30 Oprah (1805893). 10.20 Sunset Beach (1805893). 11.00 Leeza (1805893). 12.00 5 News (1805893). 1.00 Bold and the Beautiful (1805893). 1.30 The Roseanne Show (1805893). 2.00 100 Per Cent (S) (1805893). 2.30 Good Afternoon (1805893).
- 3.30 FILM: The Lies Boys Tell** (1994). Aging, aged Kirk Douglas takes his estranged son on a journey home in this tele-drama (T) (1805893).
- 5.20 Sunset Beach** (S) (1805893).
- 6.00 100 Per Cent** (S) (1805893).
- 8.30 Family Affairs** (S) (1805893).
- 7.00 5 News** (S) (1805893).
- 7.30 Champions of the Wild.** A look at the work of the Santa Rosa National Park in Costa Rica (S) (1805893).
- 6.00 Perfect Babies.** Mark Easton starts a new three-part series on how parents are being offered the chance to design the genetic make-up of their children and the implications this has for the future of mankind (S) (1805893).
- 9.00 FILM: Bat 21** (1988). US airforce pilot Gene Hackman lands deep behind enemy lines after ejecting from his plane over Vietnam. A radio contact (via radio contact) is spotted by Danny Glover. A tense drama which avoids false heroics. (S) (1805893).
- 11.00 Two.** Thriller. Gus is now penniless and suspected of killing his wife. Michael Easton stars (S) (1805893).
- 11.55 The Jack Docherty Show** (S) (1805893). 12.35 Live and Dangerous (S) (1805893). 1.45 Live and Dangerous (continued) (S) (1805893). 3.45 Asian Football Show (S) (1805893). 4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (1805893). 5.30 100 Per Cent (R) (S) (1805893). To 6am.

ITV/Regions

- Anglia.** As Granada excepts. 12.30 Angel News (1805893). 1.30 Local News (1805893). 2.30 Home and Away (1805893). 3.30 News (1805893). 4.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 5.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 6.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 7.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 8.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 9.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 10.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 11.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 12.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 1.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 2.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 3.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 4.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 5.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 6.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 7.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 8.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 9.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 10.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 11.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 12.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 1.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 2.30 The Mary White House (1805893). 3.30 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## SUNDAY TELEVISION

## BBC1

**6.55 The Munsters** (T) (7892300). 7.20 Match of the Day (S) (T) (845132). 8.30 Breakfast with Frost (S) (T) (8132). 9.30 The Heaven and Earth Show (S) (86039). 10.30 Paradise (T) (8935). 11.00 Match of the Day (S) (T) (8403). 11.30 Countryfile (S) (T) (8132). 12.00 News (T) (815187). 12.45 Hot Shots (R) (S) (T) (855618). 1.00 EastEnders (R) (S) (T) (8557300). 2.25 Cartoon (8352222).

## BBC2

**2.35 The Parent Trap** (1991). Hayley Mills as twin sisters who meet for the first time at camp (T) (8500593).

**4.40 MasterChef** (S) (T) (729403). 5.30 News: Weather (T) (245022). 5.30 Regional News and Weather (53871).

**5.35 Songs of Praise** (S) (T) (583867).

**6.40 Last of the Summer Wine**. Long-running sitcom (R) (S) (T) (81707).

**6.40 Antiques Roadshow**. The antiques team visit Gateshead (S) (T) (250652).

**7.25 Stargate** (1994). Kurt Russell 'baddy goes' through a time portal in this comic-strip sci-fi (S) (T) (8257787).

**9.35 News: Weather** (T) (789723).

**9.30 The Lakes**. The villagers attend the funeral of the three children tragically drowned in the lake (S) (T) (81707).

**10.30 Unfinished Business**. Comedy starring Harriet Walter (S) (T) (81707).

**10.40 I'm Alan Partridge**. Comedy series charting the fortunes of the city former chat-show host (R) (S) (T) (81707).

**11.40 Ruby Wax Meets...** (R) (S) (T) (81707). 11.40 The Big End (S) (T) (81707).

**12.10 Final Verdict** (1991). Treat Williams as Twentieth-century Earl Rogers in a low-key tele-biopic (S) (T) (81707).

**1.40 The Sky at Night** (S) (T) (81707). 2.05 News: Weather (T) (789723). To 6am.

## BBC2

**7.30 King Greenfingers** (R) (S) (4509045). 7.35 Dilly the Dinosaur (R) (8409045). 7.45 Teletubbies (S) (4684294). 8.30 Little Mouse on the Prairie (R) (T) (789788). 8.55 Alvin and the Chipmunks (R) (7578403). 9.20 Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show (R) (8556585). 9.45 The Wild House (S) (T) (8556585). 10.10 Wayne Manifesto (S) (8562923). 10.35 Grange Hill (R) (S) (T) (846162). 11.00 Kids and Cops (S) (T) (81732). 11.25 Grange Hill (R) (S) (T) (846162). 11.50 The O Zone (R) (S) (T) (789774). 12.05 The Simpsons (R) (S) (T) (4513652). 12.30 Robot Wars (R) (S) (T) (81732). 1.00 Top Gear - the TVR Story (S) (T) (81732). 1.30 Sunday Grandstand (S) (T) (81732). 1.35 Six Sunday (810167). 2.30 Basketball (810167). 5.00 The Boat Show (S) (3229).

**6.00 World Darts**. Coverage of the final of the 1998 Embassy world championship. With Ray Stubbs (S) (4548229).

**8.40 Inside the Lords**. The series continues by meeting a collection of cross-benchers - members with no party allegiance (S) (T) (823671).

**8.50 Monet's Gardens** (S) (T) (819677).

**9.00 History of Alternative Comedy**. Angus Deayton tells how the new wave of British comedy began (S) (T) (2381).

**9.30 Gimme Gimme Gimme**. Linda and Tom awake to find a half-naked man in their flat (S) (T) (25958).

**10.00 Clockwatch** (S) (T) (258861).

**10.30 Shooting the Past**. Three-part drama by Stephen Poliakoff. See Choice, below (S) (T) (7837869).

**11.25 Timespace** (1992). Small-town widower Jeff Daniels has peculiar visitors at his modest guest house. A small-scale fantasy, but it's well-acted (S) (T) (806381).

**2.00 Learning Zone**. (7133387). To 6.35am.

## ITV Granada

**6.00 GMTV** (86677). 9.00 Diggil (135377). 9.25 Art Attack (R) (S) (T) (8575942). 9.45 Worst Witch (R) (S) (T) (8590381). 10.25 Supermarket (828403). 10.55 Cartoon (T) (85381). 11.00 My Favourite Hymns (S) (T) (8671). 11.30 Sunday Morning (S) (T) (22774). 12.30 The Sunday Supplement (8720). 1.00 News: Weather (T) (7378720). 1.10 Jonathan Dimbleby (S) (T) (8559552). 2.00 Granada News (T) (857403). 2.05 Murder, She Wrote (2002300).

**3.00 Meet Me in St Louis** (1944). A great musical, affectionately recreating idyllic small-town life in the early 1930s. With Judy Garland (78855).

**5.00 Coronation Street** (R) (T) (7855).

**6.00 Granada News** (T) (867720).

**6.05 Soccer Sunday** (488213).

**6.45 News: Weather** (T) (123403).

**7.00 Bill Bryson's Notes from a Small Island**. Travelogue (S) (T) (8564).

**7.30 Coronation Street** (T) (923).

**8.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?** Big-money quiz show (S) (T) (4872).

**8.30 Heartbeat** (S) (T) (70687).

**9.30 London's Burning**. Blue Watch grieves over Nick's death (S) (T) (72233).

**10.30 News: Weather** (T) (555395).

**10.45 The South Bank Show**. Profile of singer John Tomlinson (S) (T) (451671).

**11.45 Faith and Music** (T) (21947). 12.15 Still in Bed with Medlin (T) (732075).

**12.50 Hearts on Fire** (1991). Tom Skerritt hires nurse Mary Hagenberger to help him with his wife (73614).

**2.35 Quest DSV** (S) (8158256). 3.30 Jonathan Dimbleby (S) (T) (812140). 4.40 Cybernet (R) (S) (85973548). 4.45 ITV Nightscreen (5562459). 5.30 News (70256). To 6am.

## Channel 4

**6.05 Ben and Ted's Excellent Adventures** (789300). 6.35 Dog City (844484). 7.05 Frodo Frodoes (816178). 7.30 Animal Alphabet (829585). 7.45 Sali's Lighthouse (83587). 7.55 The Magic School Bus (84558). 8.35 Johnny Bravo (233584). 8.45 Catdog (81212). 9.45 Planet Pop (835294). 10.00 The Waltons (83774). 11.00 Holydays (832072). 12.00 The Waltons (838300). 1.15 Football Italia (4973483). 3.30 Earthscope (869222).

**3.40 A Challenge for Robin Hood** (1987). Straightforward re-telling of the familiar tale (83358).

**5.30 Time Team**. A Cornish family want to know why their back garden is full of Roman pottery (89942).

**6.30 The Hampton Court Palace**. Omnibus edition (R) (8107).

**7.30 Art House - Loving Lenin**. Arts documentary about the creation of the Lenin myth in Russia, made as the Russian people are about to vote whether his embalmed body should remain in Red Square (86774).

**8.30 Hostage**. First of a three-part on the Beirut hostage crisis. Contributors include Terry Waite, Brian Keenan, Oliver North and Jill Morrell (78222).

**9.30 True Blue** (1996). True story about an attempted mutiny by American members of the Oxford crew in the 1987 Boat Race (3080584).

**11.40 Babylon 5** (1997). 12.35 Dark Skies (R) (S) (817168).

**1.30 Les Amants du Pont-Neuf** (1991). Juliette Binoche plays a young artist losing his sight and getting together with a deaf street punk (817617).

**3.40 Claudia** (1943). Dorothy McGuire is the slender young girl perplexed by married life (81617).

**5.45 Benny the Boy Atlas**. Quirky comedy (752343). To 6am.

## Channel 5

**6.00 Mixing It** (S) (T) (8750364). 6.30 Havelkazo (R) (773967). 7.00 Dimpledown Farm (R) (817132). 7.30 Mikshakel (S) (820525). 7.35 Wintzels House (R) (888045). 8.00 Do You Believe It? (S) (816586). 8.30 Revelation Game (S) (876519). 9.05 Sticks! Around (823555). 9.30 Kablam! (833036). 10.00 Mirror, Mirror (R) (S) (833036). 10.30 The Valley Between (R) (177671). 11.00 Daria (R) (S) (867624). 11.30 Singled Out (R) (S) (467792). 12.00 The Mag (S) (7942836). 1.00 News (S) (T) (7906884). 1.20 Frostur on Sunday (S) (820610). 1.50 Family Affairs Omnibus (R) (S) (T) (8196197).

**5.30 Ernest Goes to Camp** (1987). Rubber-faced kid Varnley is a wimp with kids in America. Warning: he makes Jerry Lewis look normal (T) (8687497).

**7.00 From Jesus to Christ**. Documentary series about the rise of Christianity, presented by Terry Waite. This episode considers the political and social climate which influenced how the story of Jesus was told and eventually written as the Gospels (S) (T) (820316).

**9.00 Call of the Wild**. Wildlife documentary examining the world of the mountain gorilla, a peaceful and family-minded, even humorous vegetarian who seeks to avoid trouble (R) (T) (5533836).

**9.00 No One Would Tell** (1995). Candace Cameron falls for the wrong guy at high school. Gloomy melodrama with Fred Savage (T) (5223720).

**10.40 The Comedy Store**. Stand-up comedy at London's Comedy Store from Arj Barker, Paul Thorne, Andy Robinson and Steve Gribbin (S) (343712).

**11.45 Water Rats** (866232). 12.05 Sports Talk with Steve Scott (817121). 12.35 Ice Hockey - NHL 98: Colorado Avalanche vs Detroit Red Wings (S) (8987527). 4.40 Tibs and Fibi (R) (S) (7260442). 5.05 Move On Up (R) (S) (8581633). 5.30 Wildlife SOS (R) (3205099). To 6am.

## ITV/Regions

Anglia  
Assemble: 12.30 Anglia News (840433). 1.00 Local (840433). 1.30 News (840433). 2.00 Local (840433). 2.30 News (840433). 3.00 Local (840433). 3.30 News (840433). 4.00 Local (840433). 4.30 News (840433). 5.00 Local (840433). 5.30 News (840433). 6.00 Local (840433). 6.30 News (840433). 7.00 Local (840433). 7.30 News (840433). 8.00 Local (840433). 8.30 News (840433). 9.00 Local (840433). 9.30 News (840433). 10.00 Local (840433). 10.30 News (840433). 11.00 Local (840433). 11.30 News (840433). 12.00 Local (840433). 12.30 News (840433). 1.00 Local (840433). 1.30 News (840433). 2.00 Local (840433). 2.30 News (840433). 3.00 Local (840433). 3.30 News (840433). 4.00 Local (840433). 4.30 News (840433). 5.00 Local (840433). 5.30 News (840433). 6.00 Local (840433). 6.30 News (840433). 7.00 Local (840433). 7.30 News (840433). 8.00 Local (840433). 8.30 News (840433). 9.00 Local (840433). 9.30 News (840433). 10.00 Local (840433). 10.30 News (840433). 11.00 Local (840433). 11.30 News (840433). 12.00 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# SATURDAY RADIO

## PICK OF THE DAY

GRAEME GARDEN'S series of medicine-related humour, What's the Bleeding Time? (1pm R2), comes to a close with a number of psychiatric sketches. Although an obvious subject for double-acts (there are samples of Fry and Laurie and the Two Ronnies), there are some solo gems, including a typically monomaniacal riff from Jackie Mason.

The highlight of Radio 3's day is Opera on 3 (6.30pm). Janacek's *Katya Kabanova*, conducted by Charles Mackerras with the New York Metropolitan Opera, has Catherine Malfitano in the none-too-gentle lead. Still No Truce (12.25am R4) is a very welcome repeat of the thoughts on faith of Anglo-Welsh poet RS Thomas (right). DOMINIC CAVENTISH



8.40 Katya Kabanova, Act 3. 8.55 The Brains Trust. Joan Bakewell chairs the discussion programme, originally launched in 1941 on BBC Radio's Home Service, in which leading minds in the fields of art, science, religion and philosophy debate important intellectual issues. Guests in this programme are historian Theodore Zeldin, theologian Rev Angela Tilby, mathematician Prof Ian Stewart, and visual arts professor Ludmila Jordinova. 9.40 Quartet and Piano. Petersen Quartet, Stephen Kovacevich (piano). Beethoven: String Quartet in C minor, Op 18 No 4. Schumann: Kinderszenen. Mozart: Piano Quartet in E flat, K493. 10.55 BBC Symphony Orchestra. Conductor Martyn Brabbins. Taylor: Conflict and Consolation for wind ensemble. Colin Matthews: Quatrain for wind, brass and percussion. 11.30 Jazz on 3. 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

**RADIO 4** (92.4-94.6MHz FM) 6.00 News Briefing. 6.05 Sports Desk. 6.30 Open Country. 6.57 Weather. 7.00 Today. 9.00 Home Truths. 10.00 News; Double Vision. 11.00 News; The Food Programme. 11.30 From Our Own Correspondent.

12.00 News; Money Box. 12.30 The Ghost of Number Ten. 12.55 Weather. 1.00 News. 1.05 Any Questions? 1.10 News; Any Answers? 0870 210 044. 2.30 Empire Warriors. 3.00 News; The Saturday Play: Seven Circles around the Fire. 4.00 News; Woman's Hour. 5.00 Saturday PM. 5.30 Talking Pictures. 5.54 Shipping Forecast. 5.57 Weather. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.15 Live from London. 7.00 News; Saturday Review. 7.45 Gerry's Bar. Gerry Anderson presents a series of reflections on life in Ireland. 1: 'Opening Time'. 8.00 News; The Archive Hour: Tomorrow at the Same Time. James Thurber's study of American radio soap operas in the 40s offers us a guide to that most marginal of art forms. Author Jeffrey Robinson returns to an age when 'Soapworld' was the model for how Americans should live. 9.00 News; The Classic Serial: The Rose and the Ring. By William Makepeace Thackeray, adapted for radio by Ellen Dryden. Rome, 1853. Unable to find any Christmas entertainment for the four children in his charge, Thackeray invents his own fire-side pantomime to keep them amused. With Prunella Scales and Maureen Lipman. 10.00 News and Weather.

10.15 Them and Us. Diana Macll presents the second in a series of lively debates about the major issues of the day. Proposition: 'The asylum system is too great a burden on the host country'. From Harrogate Civic Centre, North London. 11.00 News; At the Foot of the Mountain. Robert Dawson Scott invites a performer or composer to revisit a major musical challenge. This week, the composer Anthony Payne looks back at the long and sometimes controversial task of completing Elgar's Third Symphony, working from sketches left by Elgar at his death. 11.30 Fine Lines. (R) 12.00 News. 12.25 Experimental Feature: Still No Truce. See Pick of the Day. 12.30 The Late Story: The Fall. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.50 - 6.00 Bells on Sunday.

**RADIO 4 LW** (198kHz) 12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. **RADIO 5 LIVE** (693, 909kHz MW) 6.00 Dirty Tackle. 6.30 Breakfast. 9.00 Chiles on Saturday. 11.00 Move It. 11.30 Sick as a Parrot. 12.00 Sportscafe. 1.00 Sport on 5. Football: coverage of all the day's action, with reports, goal news and commentary on a top game in the FA Cup Premiership. Today's fixtures include Arsenal v Liverpool, Newcastle v Chelsea, and Middlesbrough v Aston Villa. Rugby Union: fourth-round matches in the Tetley Bitter Cup. Wales take on Western Samoa in an international friendly. Racing: the feature races from Sandown Park, and the Ladbrokes Hurdle from Leopardstown. 6.06 Six-O-Six. 8.00 Dailyn UK. Richard Dailyn with news from around the UK. 9.00 The Treatment. Stuart Macdonald and guests review the week's news. 10.00 Late Night Currie. With Edwina Currie. 1.00 Up All Night. 5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

**CLASSIC FM** (100.0-101.9MHz FM) 6.00 Sarah Lucas. 8.00 Countdown. 11.00 Masters of Their Art. 1.00 Mike Read. 3.00 Margaret Howard. 6.00 At the Movies. 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. 9.00 Opera Guide. 10.00 The Classic Quiz. 12.00 Midnight Music. 2.00 Evening Concert. 4.00 - 6.00 Sunday Start.

**VIRGIN RADIO** (1215, 1197-1260kHz MW) 10.58MHz FM) 6.00 Jeremy Clark. 9.00 Harriet Scott. 12.00 Classic Countdown with Russ Williams. 2.00 Roll and Roll Football. 6.00 Wheels of Steel. 10.00 Richard Allen. 2.00 - 6.00 Paul Coyte.

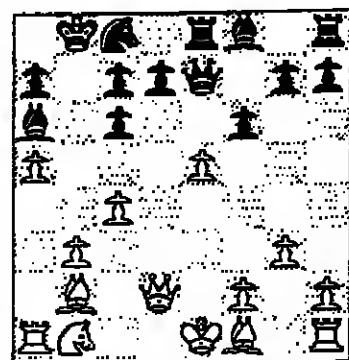
**WORLD SERVICE RADIO** (198kHz LW) 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Music Review. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Agenda. 3.00 World News. 3.35 Sports Roundup. 3.45 Letter from America. 4.00 Newsdesk. 4.30 Omnibus. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 - 6.00 Watershed.

**TALK RADIO** 8.00 Paul Ross. 11.30 Danny Baker and Danny Kelly. 1.00 The Sportszone. 5.30 Danny Baker and Danny Kelly. 7.30 Nancy Roberts. 10.00 Mike Allen. 2.00 - 6.00 Mike Dickinson.

## INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

### CHESS

JON SPEELMAN



IVAN SOKOLOV increased his winning margin to two clear points in the Hastings Premier on Thursday with a victory against Jim Plaskett, to end up on 7.9. The games between Sadler and myself, Ponomarev with Shipov and Saltaev and Miles were drawn, while John Emms ultimately defeated Laurent Fressinet. That left a five-way tie for second between Emms, Ponomarev, Sadler, Shipov and me on 5.9. Plaskett, Miles and Fressinet made 3.5 and Saltaev 2.5.

In the Challengers, Bogdan Lalic was leading going into the last round but having a favourable tie-break then took a quick draw with White. Klaus Bischoff and Saidali Ibadaliev both won, to catch up, and the two qualifying places for next year's Premier go to Bischoff and Lalic on tie-break. In tournaments in England, the control team always try to arrange the pairings to give people the chance of title norms and the Challengers yielded international master norms for Peter Sowray and Chris Duncan.

The World Amateur Championship ended in a tie between the Armenian Gagik Oganessian and the Dane Dan Erichsen, with the former taking the title on tie-break. This was the 74th edition of this venerable tournament, which this time was sponsored by Hastings Borough Council with support from Onyx UK - mainly noted in chess circles for its sponsorship of the annual Grand Prix - and Castleham Industries (Hastings), which provided the programme and new demonstration boards. Long may the Hastings New Year tournaments continue!

You may think that 7/9 sounds pretty good; not to Alexander Morozevich who demolished a minuscule weaker field in Pamplona to the tune of 8/9. His margin too, was two clear points because Michael Krasenkow got 6 while Loek van Wely was third on 5. This is how Morozevich demolished the former Women's World Champion. In this extremely sharp line of the Scotch small differences can have a huge effect. In the diagram there has been a previous game, admittedly between hugely weaker opponents, in which White had played 15 Bg2. 15 Bb3! is an enormous improvement since if 15... d6 16 e6, Morozevich quickly got a big advantage and at the end was delivering mate.

White: Alexander Morozevich  
Black: Kie Jun

Scotch Game  
1 e4 e5  
2 Nf3 Nc6  
3 d4 exd4  
4 Nxd4 Nf6  
5 Nxe6 bxc6  
6 e5 Qe7  
7 Qe2 Nd5  
8 c4 Bc6  
9 b3 0-0-0  
10 g3 Re8  
11 Bb2 f6  
12 Qd2 Nb6  
13 a4 Kd8  
14 a5 Nc8

15 Bb3 fxe5  
16 Qxd7 Qf6  
17 0-0 Bc5  
18 Nc3 Nd6  
19 Qxc6 Nc7  
20 Qd7 Rf8  
21 Nd5 Rxd7  
22 Nxf6 Rf2  
23 Nd7+ Ke8  
24 Bxe5 Bb4  
25 Bxc7 Nc5  
26 Bg2+ Bb7  
27 Nb6+ 1-0

### BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

WELL SATISFIED with his efforts on this deal, South complacently wrote down the score. Behind him, the solitary spectator (breaking one of the unwritten laws of kibitzing made disapproving noises. Can you see why?

South opened One Spade and North forced to game with 2 No-trumps (agreeing spades). South's oxt bid of Three Spades conventionally suggested an interest in progress but denied possession of a short suit. Undeterred, North cue-bid Four Clubs and then Four Hearts over South's oxt move of Four Diamonds. The partners then showed their second round controls in clubs and diamonds but there seemed to be something vital missing in hearts and they stopped accurately in Six Spades, against which West led ♠Q.

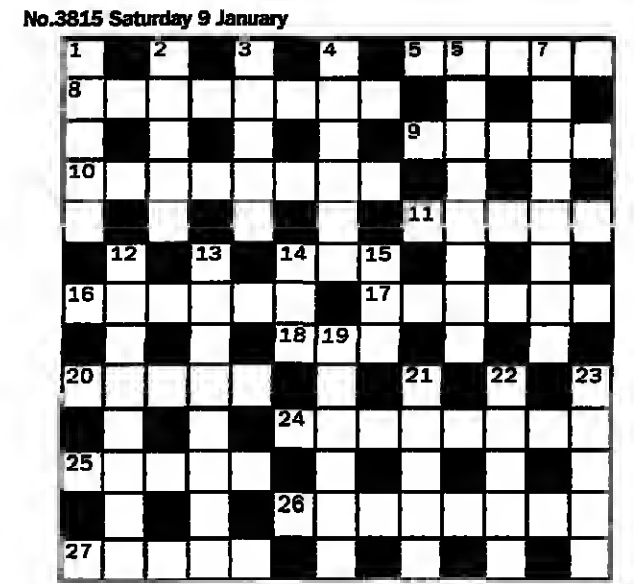
The exact duplication of distribution was annoying and, with an almost certain heart loser, the only danger lay in a 3-0 trump break. It seemed a complete guess and, after winning the lead in hand, declarer led ♠K to expose the position and, shortly afterwards, claimed.

So why was the kibitzer upset? Of course there was no reason why

Game all; dealer South	
North	
♠A10654	
♥AJ4	
♦K82	
♣A3	
East	
♠Q82	♥none
♥K93	♦10765
♦1074	♠9653
♠Q107	♥98642
South	
♠KJ973	
♥Q82	
♦AQJ	
♣A5	

East, if anyone, held all three missing trumps but a good technician would have led a low trump to the ace at trick two. The point is that if (as happens) West proves to have a trump trick there is still the possibility that he holds ♠K as well. So, when the position is revealed, declarer simply cashes ♠K, plays off all his minor suit winners, finesses ♥J, then exits with a trump. West, on lead, will have to lead away from his ♥K or concede a ruff and discard.

## CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- Caper (5)
  - Bleed (8)
  - Points total (5)
  - Anonymous (8)
  - Drawbacks (5)
  - Avail oneself of (3)
  - Football (6)
  - Boundaries (6)
  - None (3)
  - Surplus to requirements (5)
  - Notorious (8)
  - Drying cloth (5)
  - Vegetable (8)
  - Gemstone (5)
- DOWN
- Cord (5)
  - Florida resort (5)
  - Entire (5)
  - Population count (6)
  - Soubriquet (8)
  - Water (8)
  - Opening (8)
  - Hardly (8)
  - Vessel for tea (3)
  - Old cloth measure (3)
  - Disregard (6)
  - Observe (5)
  - Punctuation mark (5)
  - Savoury jelly (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:  
ACROSS: 1 Impress, 5 Saree (Impressari), 8 Isopet, 9 Penner, 10 Gaboridine, 12 Ash, 13 Edible, 14 Median, 17 Ram, 18 Challenge, 20 Aerobic, 21 Value, 23 Knead, 24 Sandpit, DOWN: 1 Jcing, 2 Pie, 3 Entrail, 4 Septic, 5 Sense, 6 Rationing, 7 Earthen, 11 Boat-mate, 13 Earmark, 15 Entail, 16 Dances, 18 Cubed, 19 Eject, 25 Larp.

## SATELLITE AND CABLE

### PICK OF THE DAY

WHOOPI GOLDBERG'S career has been marked by peaks and troughs - there have been long gaps between impressive work such as *The Color Purple* and *Ghost*. Her career is assessed in *Femmes Fatales* (6.30pm Sky Moviemax), which is followed by an evening of her movies. In *Theodore Rex* (7pm), a fantasy comedy, Goldberg (right) plays a cop teamed with a genetically-engineered dinosaur. For Daniel Petrie's comedy, *The Associate*

(8.30pm), she has to dress up as a white male Wall Street financier. Eddie... (10.30pm) casts her as a basketball fan who becomes coach of the New York Knicks. Despite a thin spell Bath remain a formidable cut outfit and they should have a hard-fought encounter against the reigning league champions in Newcastle vs Bath (1.30pm Sky Sports 2).



JAMES RAMPTON

fare (12.22pm), 12.00 Warfare (3940213), 1.00 Weapons (253294), 2.00 Close.

**SKY ONE** 2.00 Bump in the Night (5010), 2.30 Street Stories (5553), 3.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 3.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 4.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 4.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 5.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 6.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 6.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 7.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 7.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 8.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 8.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 9.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 9.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 10.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 10.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 11.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 11.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 12.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 12.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 1.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 1.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 2.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 2.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 3.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 3.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 4.00 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 4.30 Star Trek: Voyager (5937), 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager 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## JASPER REES

## TELEVISION REVIEW

AS PART OF "Prestige Night" on New Year's Day, Channel 4 screened the episode which viewers had nominated as their favourite. It was a remarkable show, but an even more remarkable character, because Fraser himself was on screen and Kelsey Grammer appeared in only one fleeting scene. You would think that value of his character would be his character would.

In the new series (C), Fraser has been lived from KACT, and appears in two limited roles on TV which we found him welcoming viewers to the new side, and making respectful notice about the previous occupant. American viewers would have read that as a subtextual homage to Seinfeld. For this sixth series, Fraser has stayed in his Scottish home in NYC's prestigious apartment on Thursday. The studio audience duly gave it a knowing laugh. The camera pulled back to reveal that this was only a screen test, and that Fraser has by no means got a new job. There's a sense in which the character is audacious not only in America as Seinfeld's replacement, but also for the British audience, whose favourite episode was the one in which Niles took Daphne to a ball after his date dropped out. In this new series, their romance has finally been allowed to blossom. They may as well start calling the show Niles. There has been only one episode of Glimme Glimme (BBC2) so far, and I've already nominated my favourite. It's the one where the two main characters go on holiday in the first scene and never come back. In this dream episode, their neighbour, a retired prostitute, wouldn't have to complain about the noise. "Ambient trip top" I can put up with, she drawled last night, "but when you put on Acker Bilk I was sick." There's no censure on the planet who could make that line sting.

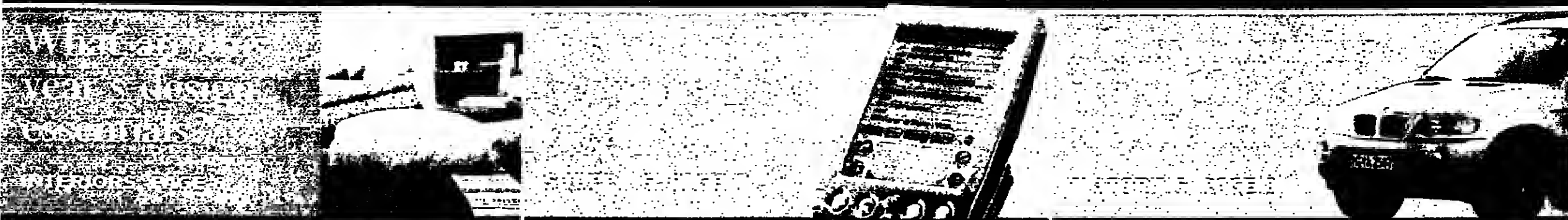
On paper, this flashier sitcom has enough going for it. It scores kindly Burke as a lonely, bitter, unimpressive, and James Dreyfus as a gay actor between jobs. The script is by Jonathan Harvey, whoen sitcoms were a more on life, in a play, you can imagine him hitting randomly on it. It's a scenario in which a straight woman and a gay man both lead other the same kind. But is there enough in it for an entire series? Making my bet, I can't think of any playwrights who have successfully written sitcoms, or even a sketch, unless you count Patrick Marber's co-writing credit on *Knockout* (Me. Kowling). You, the rhythm of the two forms are different but excellent in one area is no guarantee of even mild talent in another. This looks like a tribute to the campiness of the awful sitcoms Harvey grew up on. In the form of an improvisation, I've got the campiness down to a T, with his frank allusions to gay love, but he also got the subtleties too. Harvey uses a much broader brush than he would for theatre, and, for the most part, the dialogue is too frenetic, too eager to make an impression.

- 7.00 The Munsters** (R) (2142199) **7.25 News** Weather (2142279) **7.30** *Franken Sam* (R) (2143460) **7.40** The Incredible Hulk (R) (2143460) **8.05** Hero Turf: the New Mutation (S) (2143460) **8.30** The New Adventures of Superman (R) (S) (2143460) **8.45** Live and Kicking (S) (2143460)
- 12.00 News** Weather (1) (2142279) **12.15** Grandstand (S) (2142279) **12.20** Football Focus (2142279) **1.15** Stirling (2142279) **1.45** Racing from Leamington (2142279) **1.55** Stirling (2142279) **2.30** Racing from Leamington (2142279) **2.45** World Data Around the Globe (2142279) **2.55** World Data World Data (2142279) **3.45** Football Half-Time (2142279) **4.00** World Data (2142279) **4.40** Fine Score (2142279)
- 5.15** *News* Weather (1) (2142279) **5.25** Regional News and Weather (2142279)
- 5.30** *Yoko* (R) (2142279) **5.40** *Yoko* (R) (2142279)
- 6.05** *John Davidson's Generation Game*. The artistic game show returns with the original host, John Davidson. (S) (2142279)
- 7.05** *Mojo's House Party* (S) (2142279)
- 7.50** *The National Lottery Draw*. Die Whinn's guests are the National Lottery draw. (S) (2142279)
- 8.10** *Casualty*. Passion runs high, as they say, when Sean and Chloe are sent to treat a patient held in a riot-battered police station. (S) (2142279)
- 9.00** *Only Fools and Horses*. The Christmas edition from 1992 in which the Trotters become environmentally aware. (S) (2142279)
- 10.05** *News* Weather (1) (2142279)
- 10.25** *Match of the Day*. Liverpool's win to Highbury is, naturally, the main event, followed by Manchester United's victory over Arsenal. (S) (2142279)
- 11.35** *ITV* *The Postman* (S) (2142279) **11.45** *ITV* *The Postman* (S) (2142279)
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# YOUR MONEY

HOW TO MAKE IT - HOW TO SPEND IT



## Make euros work for you

Many banks are already offering euro products, but will customers use them? By Rachel Fixsen

In case anyone is confused, here's a reminder: the UK has opted out of the European single currency - the pound is still the pound. Most of us knew that anyway, but with every high-street bank in Britain offering some sort of euro product, from current accounts to mortgages, you could be forgiven for thinking this country had adopted the euro too.

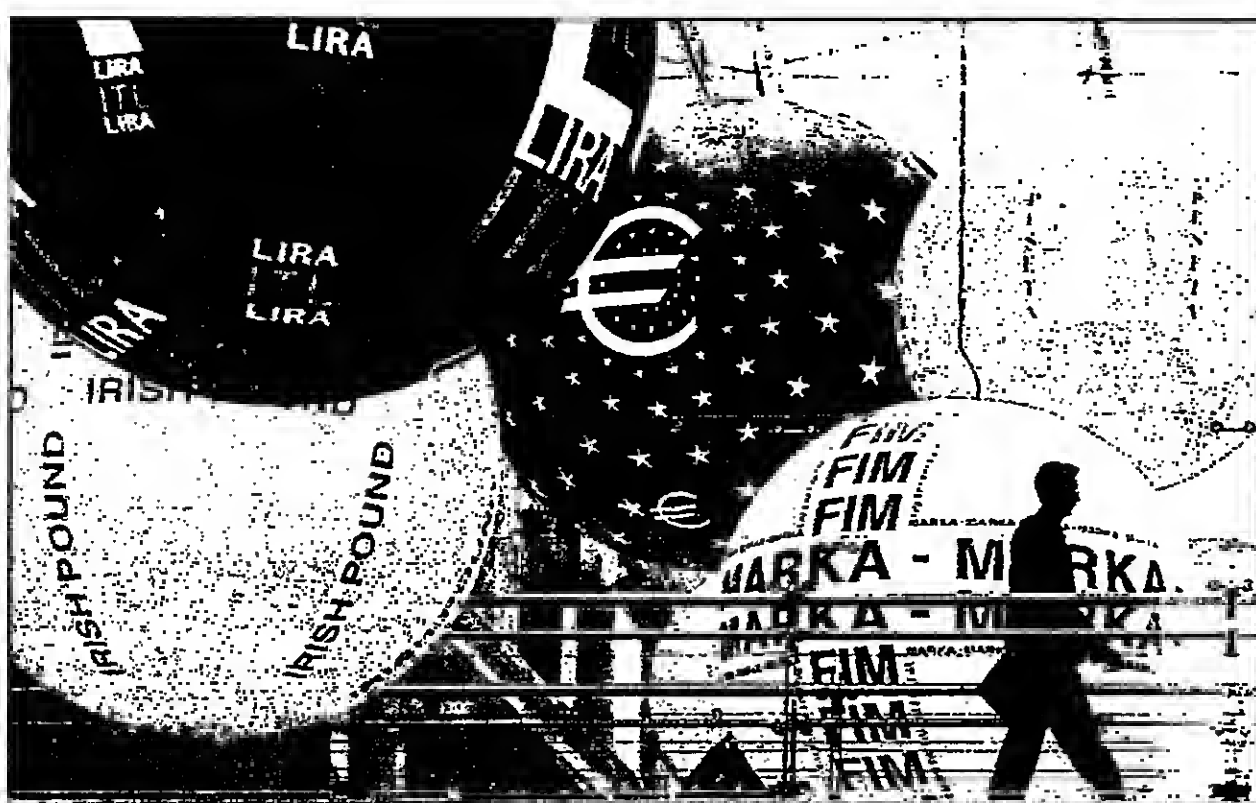
Barclays and NatWest say they are offering personal customers a full range of banking products in the euro - the new currency which came into effect in 11 European countries at the beginning of the year.

Some banks have embraced the euro enthusiastically, launching a raft of new products to test the market, but others are more sceptical. Lloyds TSB, Cater Allen Bank and Citibank are also offering euro current accounts, but Midland sees limited demand and is only offering euro travellers cheques.

Charges vary. There is no charge for the NatWest, Barclays or Citibank accounts, but both have high minimum balances - 3,000 and 2,000 euros respectively. Citibank charges 15 euros a month if the balance falls below this.

Most of the accounts pay interest, but only at a very low level. Citibank pays tiered interest, from a quarter per cent up to 1 per cent for balances over 50,000 euros.

Who needs a euro current account? Typically, these accounts would have an appeal for internationally orientated customers, says Citibank's Amanda Iremonger. Someone who travels regularly to the rest of Europe, or somebody who owns property or has personal ties to other European coun-



Giant balloons, one for each currency taking part, mark the start of the euro in Paris

Jack Dabaghian/Reuters

tries might be tempted to open an account. Citibank has already received a lot of customer interest in the euro current account. "As the euro becomes more a part of peoples' lives, it will become more applicable to a broader section of the public," says Ms Iremonger.

For the vast majority of people in the UK, though, euro accounts will be irrelevant. "We don't see there's much need for our personal customers to open euro accounts," says Joanne Davis, a NatWest spokeswoman. Less than 5,000 personal euro current accounts have been opened, which represents less than 0.1 per cent

of NatWest's customer base. Lloyds TSB says euro current accounts have only been opened by customers who already held accounts in the euro - or a European foreign currency.

Most people in the UK will not have to change their banking arrangements at all. The euro is just another foreign currency. Existing debit and credit cards can generally be used in continental Europe to shop in euros, just as they were used to buy marks and francs.

Euro-denominated travellers cheques should be more widely used than euro accounts. They are being offered

by all the banks, although travellers cheques will also be available in the original European currencies. Someone going on holiday to France may choose to take travellers cheques in francs. But if the journey is likely to involve more than one European country, euro travellers cheques would be better, as they can be cashed in any of the 11 participating countries.

Whether all shops and restaurants in Euroland will actually accept euro travellers cheques remains to be seen. Midland says it cannot guarantee they will be accepted in all outlets, though banks will certainly accept them.

Since interest rates for the euro are lower than sterling rates, savings accounts have little appeal. Through its offshore branches, Halifax has launched a euro savings account with a minimum opening balance of 10,000 euros. Rates are tiered from 2.25 per cent to 3 per cent for over 250,000 euros. With euro returns so low, Lloyds TSB says there is little point in offering savings accounts.

But lower rates should mean cheaper mortgages. Barclays has already launched a euro mortgage, and Abbey National is due to unveil a similar product next month. Lloyds TSB says it plans to offer a euro

mortgage in the second quarter of this year.

The loan, made against a UK property, is denominated in euros and monthly repayments must be in the new currency. Barclays' euro variable mortgage rate is 4.72 per cent, compared to 7.7 per cent for its sterling rate. On a £100,000 interest-only mortgage, this would mean payments of £371 a month, compared to £614 on the standard rate.

But providers are quick to warn about the risks involved in taking out any type of foreign currency mortgage, and stipulate that borrowers must have an income in euros. "In the late Eighties when interest rates were high, we did see people looking to borrow in a foreign currency," says Margaret Schwarz, product manager for mortgages at Abbey National. "But they were rather badly burned by the depreciation of sterling," she adds.

If the euro rises sharply against sterling, a euro mortgage raised against a house priced in sterling could even become higher than the value of the property, leaving the borrower with negative equity. Because of this risk, Barclays will only lend up to 65 per cent of the value of the property with its euro mortgage, and Abbey National has set a 70 per cent loan-to-value limit. "No one knows how stable the euro will be," says Mike Thompson, Barclays euro manager.

People working for multinational companies are most likely to take out euro mortgages, says Margaret Schwarz. "We have already had quite a surprising response," she adds.

Lloyds TSB euro helpline: 0845 3000138; Barclays euro helpline: 0845 60066

### BARGAIN HUNTER



#### Property of the week

Rooms with a view of the Downs

IT HASN'T been touched for about 20 years and needs new plumbing, wiring, kitchen and a bathroom - but if The Elms, a large detached Victorian house in Pulborough, West Sussex, was renovated, it could be worth another £75,000. The five-bedroom red-brick house overlooking the South Downs retains original features such as fireplaces, picture rails and sash windows. There's also a building in the garden which was used as a nursery school. With outdoor swimming pool, it's for sale at £275,000 through Guy Leonard. For details ring 01798 874033.

ROSALIND RUSSELL

#### Car of the week

Reports of its death were much exaggerated

IF YOU thought the Austin Maestro was dead, it has just been resting - in crates. Rover tried to build them in Bulgaria four years ago, but the deal went bad and 138 vans and 483 cars came back to Blighty, in crates. Trans European Trading (01531 636252) bought them and rebuilt them. Transportation at its most basic. Not pretty, but easy and cheap to own, £3,995 as a left-hand drive, £4,995 converted. However, an ad by David Hill Associates offered a left-hand one for just £2,950. Hurry while stocks last. Call 01933 413863.

JAMES RUPPERT

#### Deal of the week

A good time to become a card carrier

EVERY TIME you think you have come up with a definitive bargain, someone comes up with a better deal - especially for those with a massive Christmas financial headache. Anyone taking out a Co-operative Bank Advantage or Advantage Gold Visa card will pay just 5.9 per cent on outstanding balances until July 1999. Thereafter, the rate reverts to a standard 13.8 per cent variable rate. The introductory deal includes debt transferred from other issuers, plus new purchases. Both cards have no annual fee. Any snags? Well, there's no interest-free period at all. Call 0800 126000.

NIC CICUTTI

## Basic information comes at a price you may not like

Phone and fax info lines can be a lot more expensive than you expect. By Paul Slade

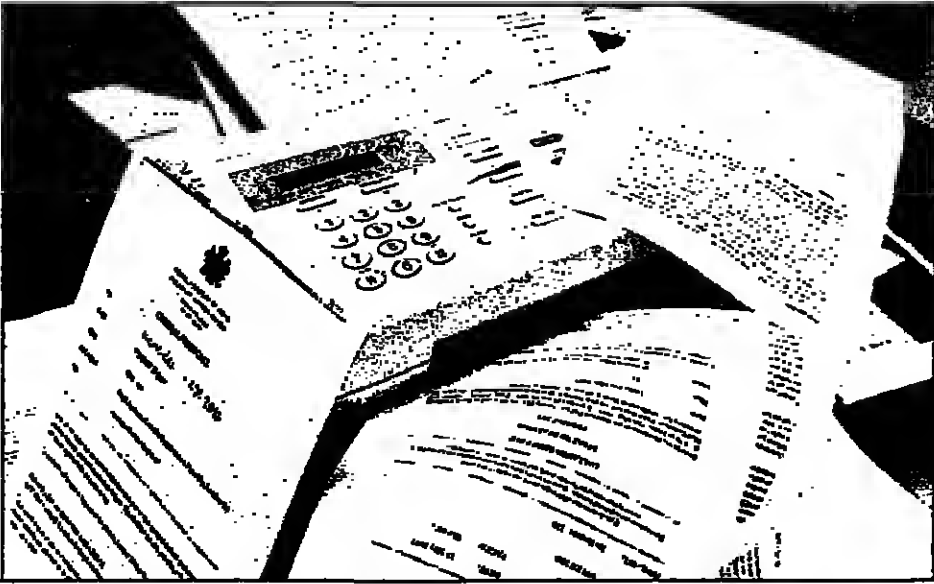
HOW MUCH would you pay for a fax telling you about the best mortgage deals or bank accounts? If you are not careful, it could be more than you think.

Telephone watchdogs have just fined a Crewe company, Bond Associates, £5,000 for failing to tell people its phone service, selling bank accounts and mortgages, cost callers £1.50 a minute. Neither the company's leaflets, nor the staff who callers reached, made it clear just how much the calls cost.

The fine was levied by Ictis, the body responsible for policing premium-rate fax and telephone services. Ictis has closed down the line, barred Bond Associates from operating premium-rate services for one year and alerted the police.

Rob Dwight, an Ictis spokesman, says that Bond Associates' main breach was "complete lack of pricing information". But Bond Associates also broke the rules by promoting the bank account service to individuals as well as companies. Mr Dwight says: "Their permission certificate was supposed to be for a business line. But all the complaints we had were from private individuals. Obviously, the service was inappropriately promoted as well."

The £5,000 fine was imposed just before Christmas, and comes on top of another £750 Ictis fine against Bond Associates



made earlier in 1998. Bond Associates declined to comment on the fines when contacted by The Independent.

Late last year, Ictis fined Nationwide List Brokers £500 for a fax service giving details of special offers from suppliers such as "leading banks, credit card companies, insurance companies, loan and financial companies". Recipients were told they would receive a fax every evening unless they faxed back a note asking to be taken off the list.

The faxes advertised were free. But the number given for cancellations was a premium-

rate number, charging users £1.50 a minute. Unlike Bond Associates, Nationwide List Brokers' promotional material does carry a footnote pointing out the cost of the call.

Eight consumers in the Midlands complained about receiving the faxes. Ictis found Nationwide List Brokers was operating outside the terms of its permission certificate by sending out unsolicited faxes.

Martin Fisher, Nationwide List Brokers' proprietor, says this service is no longer on offer, and that the promotional faxes were sent out by an employee who has since been dismissed.

Mr Dwight says: "As well as the £500 fine - which they have paid, by the way - all their future promotional material for the number they have been given permission to operate at £1.50 a minute has to be cleared by us."

Both Bond Associates and Nationwide List Brokers used telephone numbers with an 08971 prefix, BT's code for lines costing £1.50 a minute. Other prefixes from rival operators, which carry the same charge, include the following: 09910 (Torch), 03313 and 03314 (Vodafone), 08919 (Cable & Wireless) and 089612 (Redstone).

Some premium rate lines, known as "fax-back" services, ask customers to dial a number on their own fax machine which will feed out the printed information promised. But it is you who pay for transmission of the faxes you order.

In 1997, Ictis fined a company called Telecom Express £2,500 for a fax-back service giving details of repossessed properties in their own area, which were often hopelessly out of date. The service charged callers £1.50 a minute, and lists regularly took more than 15 minutes to come through, creating a total charge of £22.50.

Mr Dwight says that people getting unwelcome faxes promoting services like these should write to the company responsible and ask to be removed from their lists. "If they are still receiving faxes from the company after a two to three week period, then we may take it up as a breach of our code."

You can also contact the Telephone Preference Service or the Fax Preference Service. Their job is to circulate the details of people who want to be removed from their members' lists, but you may have to be persistent to get your own details deleted.

Ictis complaints: 0800 500212; Telephone Preference Service: 0800 398833; Fax Preference Service: 0541 554355

Thought for the day

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THE WEEKEND REVIEW



# PERSONAL FINANCE

## Time to put yourself first

### FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAMES TIM AND LINDA MAUDSLEY AGES 48 AND 50  
OCCUPATIONS ENGINEER AND NHS MANAGER

**T**im is an engineer working in the oil industry. His basic annual salary is £15,600, though he is almost guaranteed to double this when working offshore. Linda is a manager working for her local health authority. She earns £24,000 a year.

Both Tim and Linda are aware that their pension provision may be lacking. Tim has never been in a company pension scheme and made only modest contributions to personal pensions until 1994. Linda has accrued only six years on pensionable service within the NHS Superannuation Scheme. She has been contributing £35 a month to an AVC since 1989.

Much of their spare income has been spent on privately educating their daughters, Charlotte, 20, and Alison, 18. Charlotte is in her second year at university and is being financially supported by her parents. Alison is having a year out before starting a college course in September.

The adviser: Julian Crooks, financial planner at Murray Borrill & Partners, independent financial advisers and members of the IFA Network: Moor-gate House, 23 Moor-gate Road, Rotherham S60 2EN (01709 371675)

The advice: Both Tim and Linda need to boost their pension entitlements. Tim can expect a pension of around 20 per cent of his earnings in real terms at age 60; Linda around 35 per cent. Retirement at 55 would reduce their pensions to 10 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Both Tim and Linda would like to be able to consider the option of retirement from the age of 55 onwards. They have little hope of achieving this objective. Tim does have the flexibility of part-time working. Similarly, Linda foresees the same possibility for herself. This idea makes more sense.

Tim can improve his pension in two ways. Firstly, he can maximise his contributions. He is currently paying around £5,000 a year into pensions but could pay just over £10,000. On an ongoing basis Tim can increase his pension contributions by only £365 or so a month. As he will receive income tax relief automatically at 23 per cent, this will in fact cost him only £281.

Secondly, he should consider paying a single contribution to use up pensions relief unused from previous years. He can go back up to six previous years and carry forward the unused relief starting with the earliest year. In the current tax year, most of Tim's 40 per cent income tax rate will



Tim and Linda Maudsley are acutely aware of the need to boost their pensions

Guzelian

be soaked up by his pension contributions. He could elect for part of his contributions made this year to be carried back to the last tax year. This could wipe out some tax at 40 per cent which has already been paid and could result in a refund of income tax.

Tim and Linda have around £21,000 on instant access. This should be reduced to perhaps £4,000-£5,000 for short-term emergencies. The balance should be directed to Tim's pension.

As an employee, his single contribution would be automatically grossed up from £16,000 to almost £21,000, attracting tax relief at 23 per cent. His pension could be improved by around 90 per cent through this measure and by beginning additional monthly contributions.

Linda's contributions to the National Health Service Superannuation Scheme leave her able to contribute an extra £145 a month gross, or £112 a month after tax relief.

The total extra monthly pension contributions between them come to almost £400. If they cannot afford

this, whatever they do set aside should be split 75:25 in favour of Tim, who is proportionately more under-funded than Linda.

I would recommend that Tim consider with-profit pension plans offered by Standard Life and CGU and

*The Skandia MultiPep management is seen as one of the best. Careful fund selection is essential, however*

unit-linked plans offered by Professional Life. Linda has the option of buying added years through her pension scheme or contributing to a Free Standing AVC. She will probably find that increasing her Equitable Life AVC will be the most appropriate.

Tim and Linda have around £26,000

in a range of PEPs, plus a Scottish Widows with-profits bond. The relative security of the Scottish Widows bond and Scottish Widows Safety Plus PEPs (an equity-linked PEP that uses options to ensure a lock-in of unit prices once the stock market reaches certain levels) is offset by the higher-risk Skandia MultiPep.

This PEP carries higher charges than most owing to double-charging. In addition to Skandia's own charges, the funds managed by the underlying fund managers bear their own costs. For Tim, the desired outcome is to receive returns that outweigh the effect of higher charges. The Skandia MultiPep boasts some of the most respected fund management groups. But careful fund selection is essential.

The Skandia PEP is the highest-risk part of their portfolio. It is short in overseas exposure. I would recommend links to the Fidelity North America and Garton European Selected Opportunities rather than the smaller UK companies' links to Schroder and Credit Suisse.

Charlotte's tuition fees are currently paid by her LEA. Her parents are helping with her living costs. The position for Alison will be slightly different. Unless she is treated as a "gap-year" student under the Government's new scheme, she will be expected to pay up to £1,000 annually towards her tuition fees.

The financial impact on Tim and Linda will be most severe from September 1999 to July 2000 when they will be supporting both Charlotte, in her last year, and Alison, in her first.

LEAs can award maintenance grants to students but assess parental incomes. From next year there could be scope for seeking LEA assistance since there will be two children to maintain and "residual income" could reduce significantly because pension contributions are an allowable deduction from gross income.

If Tim and Linda do find themselves short they ought to consider using monies from their bond and/or PEPs rather than sacrifice pension contributions which are fulfilling a greater long-term need. Tax is a major consideration with the bond. They need to ascertain just how much can be withdrawn without incurring a higher-rate income tax liability.

Tim and Linda are also relatively exposed in the event of a long-term or critical illness. Linda would receive six months' full pay followed by six months' half-pay. Tim, on the other hand, is entitled to three months' full pay, with further payments at the company's discretion.

Even if Tim had reached age 50 it would not be a good idea to retire. He would have to look to accumulated capital to top up incapacity benefit for which he may qualify from the state.

An alternative is to consider income protection insurance. This would help to protect the medium-term investments and Tim's pension. If there is no long-term illness income protection insurance from his employer, Tim could consider a policy which defers benefits until 52 weeks of illness. Norwich Union would charge £73 a month for a tax-free monthly indexed benefit of £1,000.

Tim and Linda also need to review their wills. They have life policies with Allied Dunbar (£100,000 for Tim, £50,000 for Linda) which are not written in trust and could be subject to inheritance tax. They should consider making the policies subject to appropriate trusts. Incidentally, cuts in life assurance rates mean that they could get replacement policies at a saving of nearly 30 per cent of Tim's premium and 20 per cent of Linda's.

I HAVE seen this in dozens of films.

Little guy takes on big guy. Big guy batters little guy. "Stay down or you'll get hurt bad," he warns. Little guy gets up and gets battered again. This goes on until either the little guy succeeds (the big guy is very tired) or wins respect for not giving in.

The above scene came to me this week after reading that Michael Hardern, the former butler and one-track-minded campaigner for building societies to demutualise, is to relaunch a campaign to put a resolution - identical to the one narrowly defeated by Nationwide members in July - to this effect on the agenda at seven societies.

Portman, Britannia, Leeds & Holbeck, Skipton, Chelsea and Yorkshire are studying his proposals. Coventry appears to have escaped - Mr Hardern couldn't raise enough signatures.

His own intervention follows the decision by another campaigner, Stephen Major - a plumber from Lisburn, County Antrim - to trigger a vote among Bradford & Bingley members on the same subject in April.

It would be easy to suggest that because Nationwide rejected demutualisation, Bradford & Bingley will do so. But the Nationwide carpetbaggers will be out in even greater numbers at Bradford & Bingley. Its membership, after all, has doubled since 1995, and it is a fair bet that not all are loyal defenders of building societies.

As it happens, I am a member. I joined to get the best rates available on a particular account, and it has consistently outperformed similar accounts available from the high street banks. In common with Bradford & Bingley borrowers, I have done well with mutuals. I will be voting against Mr Major in April. What annoys me, however, is not so much that he and



NIC CICUTTI

*This is about letting a vital part of our savings industry operate unhindered*

Mr Hardern are exercising their right to put the issue to the test, but the ease with which they can do so.

It only takes 50 members to put an issue on the agenda or to stand for election to a mutual's board, which may seem democratic - until you realise that Hardern and co can disrupt a society for months.

When "ballotitis" strikes, a society has to close new accounts for fear of letting in more carpetbaggers, diverting the energies of staff and costing millions of pounds in lost returns.

The Treasury refuses to intervene, arguing that it is not there to protect societies against the will of their members. But this is about more than simply defending "democracy": it is about allowing a vitally important arm of the UK's savings and mortgages movement to operate unhindered by constant interruption and to allow honest competition to continue between societies and banks.

All it would take is to raise to 500 the number of members needed. Even a 100 minimum might prevent the frivolous Mr Hardern from forcing societies like Leeds & Holbeck to demutualise (how would such a fitchy outfit survive as a bank?).

If defeated in April, I hope that the little guy doesn't get up again.

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**Legal & General**

## Up the ante by slinging out the FTSE failures

A new tracker system claims to give better returns. By Clifford German

THE HOLY Grail for investors is a system which will automatically outperform the average and will do so without too much effort or risk. For at least the last 70 years, since Foreign & Colonial set up the first investment trust to pool investors' funds and use professional managers to outperform the market, the search for such a system has become increasingly complex and urgent.

Some investors swear by relatively simple methods, such as studying charts of the rise and fall of shares and indices. They aim to identify "trend lines" and turning points, to identify shares which are over or under valued. Others use banks of computers to crunch numbers and turn masses of data into conclusive evidence.

Professional stock-pickers have their own pet systems, such as George Soros and our own Jim Slater, whose Zulu Principle is based on identifying "value" in shares. Some investment managers invest only in high-technology stocks or new issues, or look for shares which have reached rock bottom, while tip-sheets often swear by penny shares, on the grounds that the upside is bigger than the downside.

But there is ample evidence that after paying the fund managers' charges, the average managed fund, more often than not, under-performs the markets it was supposed to beat.

This led to the expansion of "tracker funds", which are designed to follow the average performance of the market they invested in, allowing them to dispense with expensive managers and cut charges to as low as 0.5 per cent.

Tracker funds run by the likes of Virgin Direct, Legal & General and HSBC have been

helped by big companies having outperformed small company shares. Active fund managers argue that, in falling markets, the freedom to sell shares and keep the money in cash would allow them to outperform trackers. That theory has not really been properly tested.

But there are obvious disadvantages in having to hold every share in the FTSE 100, even though some will perform a lot better than others. The system comes from Hargreaves Lansdown, the Bristol-based broker and investment manager, which is offering an Active Tracker PEP intended to add common sense to the virtues of a tracker fund.

The theory is simple. A tracker fund will outperform the average managed fund, but some of the top 100 shares will perform better than others, because not all are equally well managed or in growth sectors. Anyone who can ditch the obvious duds will have a portfolio to outperform the index.

During 1998 the system kept Kingsfisher but excluded Marks & Spencer, kept Scottish Power but excluded National Power, kept Tesco but excluded Safeway from the portfolio. The company doesn't claim to have got everything right, but says its "active tracker" outperformed the index by 5 per cent in 1998.

Exactly how it operates is a professional secret, but Hargreaves Lansdown has now decided to market it to investors, and see if it can be done again in 1999. The minimum investment is £2,500, the initial charge is 3 per cent and the annual management fee is 1 per cent. Good luck!

Hargreaves Lansdown: 0800 850661

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# Stake your claim to a secure future

What you need to know about the new pensions. By Nic Cicutti



**W**indy rhetoric, or a genuine boost to millions of poorer people? When the Government announced its plans for a new system of stakeholder pensions recently, opinion on their likely effectiveness was mixed. Here, we explain some of the most important aspects of the proposals.

**What kind of a system do we have at the moment?**  
It consists of a hotchpotch of overlapping types of provision. There is the state pension; there is the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (Serps), which is linked to earnings; there are company pension schemes and there are private ones. Someone could quite easily end up with a slice of pension from each of these sources. Meanwhile, the value of a combined state pension and Serps is expected to fall.

**Why was change needed?**  
All political parties say that reform is necessary. The current system is in a mess. The number of people in retirement, compared to those in work, is rising fast and will continue to do so for the next 30-40 years. The Government argues that it cannot afford the rising cost of state pensions. While the value of pensions paid on retirement is expected to grow in line with earnings, this will not be shared equally; the richest fifth of pensioners will grab a bigger slice. Poorer pensioners will therefore slip even further behind.

**So what is the Government planning to do?**  
In essence, it will improve retirement incomes for the worst off, those earning below £9,000 a year, while using a mixture of financial incentives and coercion to "persuade" the rest of us to go private.

**How will this happen?**  
In place of the current system, whereby from April a single pensioner receives £66.75 a week and couples get £106.70 basic pension, they will receive Minimum Income Guarantees of £75 a week and £119 a week respectively. At the same time, Serps, which was supposed to underpin the basic pension when it was launched in 1978, will be closed to new entrants, in favour of a new State Second Pension (SSP).

**What will the SSP be like?**  
The SSP will become a flat-rate scheme after five years. In return for National Insurance contributions, those earning £3,300-£9,000 a year will receive a top-up to their basic pension of £50 a week. Carers at home, and the disabled, will receive credits as if they had earnings of £9,000. While the new SSP will assist those earning below £9,000, the Government hopes to reduce its attractiveness for those earning between £9,000 and £18,500.

**How?**  
Basically, by offering National Insurance rebates to those who opt out of the SSP (the old Serps). Because it will be a flat rate, the benefits of staying in the second-tier pension will taper off to very little the more money you earn. It will make more sense for people to belong to an employer's occupational pension scheme, as almost 6 million do already. These will receive tax rebates, as at present. Or people will be able to take out a stakeholder pension.

**Ah, stakeholder pensions, Labour's "big idea". How will they work?**  
The Government says there are about 5 million people earning £9,000-£20,000 a year who do not save for retirement. They will receive generous rebates if they put money into a new stakeholder pension. Up to £2,600 a year (tax-free) can go into a stakeholder pension, which can be offered by any organisation, including trade unions, financial services companies and employers. Scheme members will be able to make contributions for up to five years after they stop working - a boost to those, mostly women, who take career breaks. Employers will be required to provide stakeholder pension schemes for their staff, although they don't have to make contributions into one. They will also be allowed to join together, and set up similar schemes based on occupations and trades. But they will have to consult with staff as to which provider to choose.

**Why will stakeholder schemes be better than occupational schemes?**  
Employers will still be able to offer occupational schemes - and if they do, they don't have to offer a stakeholder pension. Occupational schemes will be better for

many employees - particularly those whose contributions are likely to be above £3,600, the maximum payable into a stakeholder scheme. For those likely to pay in below this threshold, and part-time or temporary workers, stakeholder schemes may be better - as long as employers contribute. The Government suggests that in such cases, employers may want to have a two-tier system, offering both schemes side by side. Depending on your earnings, it will make sense to belong to one or the other.

**Will they be better than personal pensions?**  
Here, the Government argues that stakeholder schemes will be vastly superior. In common with personal pensions, they will be money-purchase arrangements. They will be simple to understand and subject to tight regulatory controls - much cheaper than existing personal pension contracts - and you won't have to pay for "advice" when taking one out. Stakeholder schemes ought to replace personal pensions for most people earning less than £20,000 a year. But for people earning more, the picture changes.

**Why?**  
Mainly because of the £3,600 cap on contributions. The more you earn, the more you need to pay to ensure a proportional income in retirement. Moreover, as you become older, the proportion of income you ought to place in a pension scheme grows. Personal pensions, if cheap, will still offer good value. **So what should I do now?**  
The Government's proposals are still at the consultation stage. Even so, there's no sense in waiting until stakeholder pensions are introduced: that will take at least a couple of years, and you need to save now. However, it is highly likely that you will want to transfer your personal pension into a stakeholder one, so you need to find one where the up-front costs are virtually negligible. More on this at a later date.

**What if I already have a personal pension?**  
In some cases, the way charges have already been levied on your contract may not make it worthwhile to transfer. We will discuss this in more detail at a later stage.

EUROPE HAS a new currency but not one you can actually touch. The euro is but a virtual currency for the next two years, until the notes and coins actually come into circulation. However, anybody who is used to handling their finances through the Internet is unlikely to be dismayed at the prospect of dealing with the virtual reality of the euro. The question is whether you really need to.

For all practical purposes, unless you have significant income or outgoings in euros, you are not likely to need a euro bank account. However, if you are a frequent traveller in Europe or you own a holiday home on the Continent, then you are probably going to be joining in the single currency sooner than the rest of us. If you do decide you need a euro account, the new Citibank Euro Account, launched in December, may fit the bill. Through its



INTERNET INVESTOR  
ROBIN AMLÔT

website, the bank is now offering customers the option of online euro current accounts and euro savings accounts. Current account customers get a Visa Delta card. Citibank is offering to clear cheques and drafts drawn in any EMU-participating country free of charge. This month, the bank is adding euro bankers drafts and euro time deposits, accounts offering more attractive

interest rates in return for notice of withdrawals.

Citibank also has an EMU bulletin service on its global website which offers a pan-European perspective. It includes a euro calculator and some euro price comparisons and a list of FAQs - frequently asked questions. If you are looking for greater depth and more general information about the new single currency, check out EmuNet. The site offers a mix of daily news, official documents, practical information, commentary and analysis. It is not selling anything, other than the supposed benefits of the euro.

Of course, for the seriously rich, a Swiss bank is still the obvious port of call. Switzerland may not be part of the euro zone, but geographically it sits at the heart of what's already being called Euroland and that's also where UBS claims to be. It is in fact Europe's largest banking

group and offers detailed euro commentary for well-heeled private clients.

If you are not feeling the financial pinch after the festivities, Shelter (the charity for homeless people) is now able to receive donations over the Internet. The Charities Aid Foundation and NMI Group are piloting a scheme enabling spontaneous and tax-effective donations to be made using a single, secure charity website. Secure donations to Shelter can be made by credit card and the CAF CharityCard for tax-effective giving.

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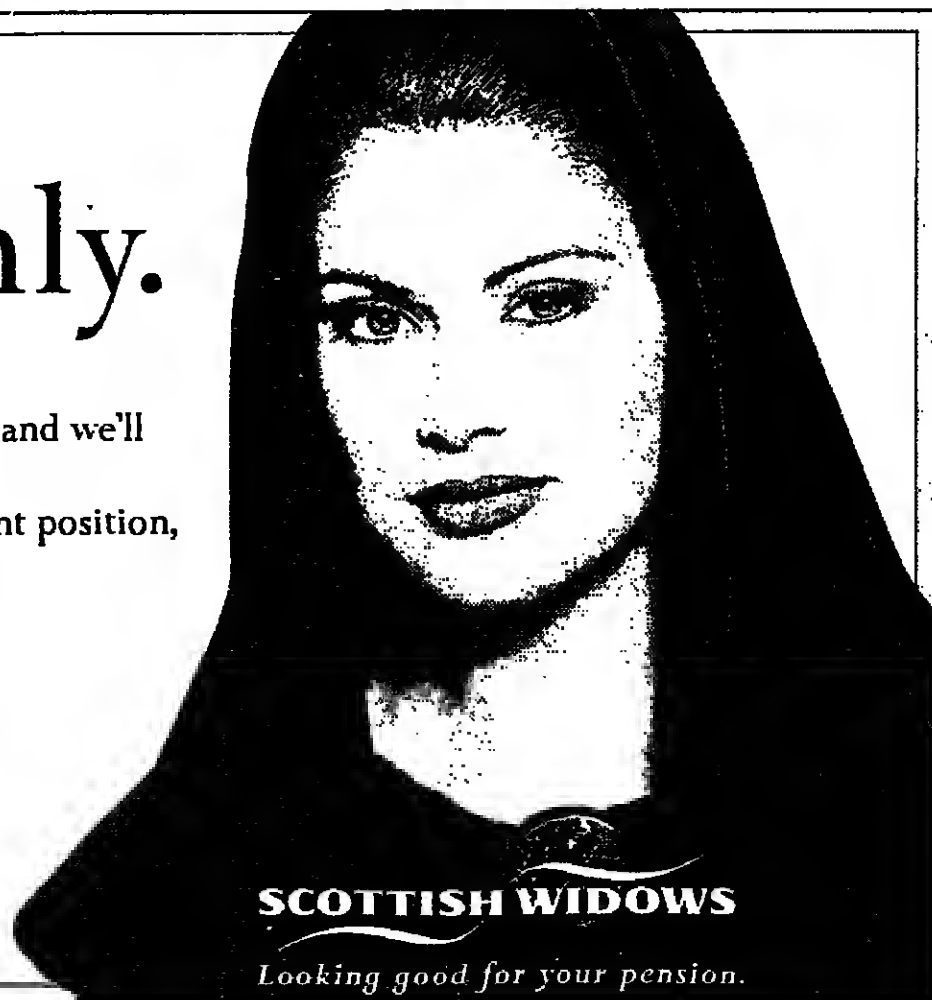
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## BEST MORTGAGES

MORTGAGES	Telephone number	% Rate and period	Max LTV %	Fee	Insurance	Redemption Penalty
<b>FIXED RATES</b> (variable rate) 10-15						
Homebase BS	0800 302010	5.95% for 2 years	95%		Refund of valuation fees up to £100	1st 2 yrs: 4% of sum repaid
Homebase BS	0191 244048	6.45% for 2 years	95%		Advances up to 5% - no MP	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
West Bromwich BS	0121 5805404	5.25% for 30 days	95%		First ASU for 1 year	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
<b>FIXED RATES</b> 10-15						
West Bromwich BS	0121 5805404	2.95% for 30 days	95%		First MP & ASU for 1 year	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Scottham BS	0950 133149	5.25% for 3 years	95%		Cash rebate	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Northolt & Pym BS	01703 302536	5.25% for 3 years	95%			1st 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
<b>CAPPED RATES</b>						
Barclay & West	0800 113855	5.95% for 1.2.02	95%		For advances up to 5% - no MP	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
Scottham BS	0950 133149	5.95% for 4 years	95%		No MP from 1st year onwards	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
First Active BS	0800 550551	5.95% for 4 years	95%			To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
<b>FIRST TIME BUYERS</b> (variable rate) 10-15						
Country BS	0945 655522	4.20% for 31.12.01	95%		For advances up to 5% - no MP	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
Albion & Lister BS	0945 655522	4.20% for 31.12.01	95%		For advances up to 5% - no MP	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
Homebase BS	0800 302010	5.70% for 5 years	95%		Refund of valuation fees up to £100	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
<b>VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES</b>						
Northolt & Pym BS	01703 302536	3.95% for 1.2.01	95%		For advances up to 5% - no MP	To 31.12.99: 5% of sum repaid
Scottham BS	0950 133149	4.95% for 3 years	95%		Cash rebate	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	6.15% for 5 years	95%		No MP from 1st year onwards	To 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid

## BEST BORROWING RATES

PERSONAL LOANS	Telephone number	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs	With insurance	Without insurance
<b>UNSECURED</b>					
Northern Rock	0845 421421	0.5% H	£182.27	£185.44	£184.81
Yoco	0845 606016	12.0%	£185.04	£184.81	£184.81
Direct Line	0181 680 9966	12.0%	£185.26	£185.26	£185.26

## OVERDRAFTS

Overdrafts	Telephone number	Account	% per	APR %	% per	APR %
<b>Overdrafts</b>						
Albion & Lister BS	0945 655522	Overdraft	0.95%	12.00%	2.25%	23.8%
Homebase BS	0800 302010	Overdraft	0.95%	12.00%	2.10%	25.3%
Abbey National	0800 731774	Overdraft	1.25%	13.00%	2.25%	31.1%

## CREDIT CARDS

Credit Cards	Telephone number	Card Type	Rate %	APR %	Annual fee	Interest	Min. balance
<b>Credit Cards</b>							
Co-operative Bank	0800 100000	Advantage Visa	0.45%	5.95%	N/A	0 days	£200
People's Bank	0800 302010	Mastercard/Visa	0.55%	5.95%	N/A	56 days	£200
HSBC	0800 077770	Visa	0.55%	5.95%	N/A	56 days	£200

## GOLD CARDS

Gold Cards	Telephone number	Card Type	Rate %	APR %	Annual fee	Interest	Min. balance
<b>Gold Cards</b>							
Co-operative Bank	0800 100000	Advantage Visa	0.45%	5.95%	N/A	0 days	£200
Co-operative Bank	0845 212212	Base Rate Visa	0.55%	10.50%	£120	46 days	£200
People's Bank	0800 302010	Mastercard/Visa	0.55%	5.95%	N/A	56 days	£200

## STORE CARDS

Store Cards	Telephone number	Card Type	Rate %	APR %	Annual fee	Interest	Min. balance
<b>Store Cards</b>							
John Lewis	Visa	1.25%	18.0%	1.5%	18.0%		
Debenhams	Visa	1.5%	25.0%	2.1%	25.0%		
Albion & Lister	01244 681681	1.5%	25.0%	2.0%	27.8%		

A - Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's existing customers.  
APR - Annual percentage rate.  
ASU - Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance.  
B+C - Buildings and contents insurance.  
H - Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged.  
LTV - Loan to value.  
MP - Mortgage interest premium.  
U - Unemployment insurance.  
W - Withdrawal fee for a limited period.  
F - Withdrawal fee for a limited period.  
R - Fixed rate (all other rates variable).  
H - Not rate.  
P - By post only.

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.  
Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476

## BEST SAVINGS RATES

Instant Access	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Instant Access</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Instant Access	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Instant Access	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Instant Access	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## NO NOTICE POSTAL ACCOUNTS

No Notice Postal Accounts	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>No Notice Postal Accounts</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	No Notice Postal	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	No Notice Postal	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	No Notice Postal	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## NOTICE ACCOUNTS &amp; BONDS

Notice Accounts & Bonds	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Notice Accounts &amp; Bonds</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Notice Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Notice Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Notice Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## CHEQUE ACCOUNTS

Cheque Accounts	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Cheque Accounts</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Cheque Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Cheque Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Cheque Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## FIXED RATE BONDS

Fixed Rate Bonds	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Fixed Rate Bonds</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Fixed Rate Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Fixed Rate Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Fixed Rate Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## FIRST TESSAS

First TESSAS	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>First TESSAS</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	First TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	First TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	First TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## FOLLOW-ON TESSAS

Follow-on TESSAS	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Follow-on TESSAS</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Follow-on TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Follow-on TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Follow-on TESSAS	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)

Guaranteed Income Bonds (net)	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Guaranteed Income Bonds (net)</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Guaranteed Income Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Guaranteed Income Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Guaranteed Income Bond	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

## OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)

Offshore Accounts (gross)	Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Overdraft	Rate %	Insurance
<b>Offshore Accounts (gross)</b>						
Yoco	0845 606016	Offshore Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Scottham BS	0950 133149	Offshore Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes
Debenhams BS	01232 841000	Offshore Account	5.00%	£10	5.00%	Yes

I FEEL spoilt for choice this week. Should I reflect on the launch of the new European currency or the return of "irrational exuberance" to stockmarkets? Perhaps I had better deal with both.

The stockmarket generally rises in the first weeks of the new year. Heaven knows why. In December, a buoyant market is put down to the "Santa Claus" effect, which, in reality, is fund managers carrying out housekeeping before the year end.

January is meant to be more considered, but markets tend to rise on average, as fund managers position themselves for the year ahead. The surge this week was attributed to US managers cutting back the cash piles built up during the year end.

Did I hear someone mention horses, stable doors and bolts? It feels that way. What is more, technology stocks are again sucking in cash. The price/earnings multiple on the Dow is now close to 40, and no thinking fund manager with a sense of history can put their hand on their heart and say this does not leave the market highly vulnerable. If it goes on like this, when the correction comes, it will be swift and dramatic.

At least the euro got off to a cracking start. There must be a few who wonder why the Square Mile put in so much effort, given that we elected to stay on the sidelines. The reality is that the euro is as much a threat as an opportunity. London dominates foreign exchange trading, and could suffer declining volumes as a result of fewer transactions in the base European currencies that will be subsumed into the euro.

Make no mistake, the euro will make a difference. It will aid the competitive edge of European companies. More important, it will level the playing field for examining the differences between shares in the same industry.

There is an argument



BRIAN TORA

The reality is that the euro is as much a threat as an opportunity

for investing in Europe on the basis that it is behind the US and UK in the economic cycle. A stronger argument, in my view, is that there will be some catching up to be done if the euro is seen to work, and European companies start to be rated against their US counterparts. The demand for European funds - and for European shares - could be strong.

This pre-supposes that the single currency works, which is not guaranteed. We did not stay out just to be bloody minded, and it is too easy to be lulled by the euphoria of a successful launch into believing that all the ducks will swim neatly into a row. Europe is not a single economic entity yet, and taxation, cultural and bureaucratic differences may yet throw strains upon the system.

However, there is much money and prestige riding upon the successful delivery of EMU. If it does all go according to plan, then we will not be talking about Europe as a part of the geographic asset diversification of a portfolio. As Europeans living in Europe, we will be investing in European shares, perhaps buying European theme funds to gain exposure to particular industries. Investors who want to be ahead of the game should think about starting now.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee

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\*Source: Morningstar 1993-1998, long term trailing return to date, gross income reinvested, £35 funds in survey. \*Source: Standard & Poor's Fund Research 1993-1998. Based on £2,000 lump sum, 14.24% to UKPS, offered at 10% discount, assuming our European PEP had been available as a PEP. Over the five years to 1 October 1998, the same investment would have provided an average annual growth rate of 17.2%. For performance, it is not necessary to go to the future. The value of units and the income from them can go down as well as up and is not guaranteed. The value of the tax advantages of a PEP depends on personal circumstances. Where applicable we will recover any overseas tax wherever it is possible and practical to do so. Exchange rate changes may cause the value of any overseas investments to go down as well as up. The tax position of PEPs will change in April 1999. For your protection calls may be recorded or monitored. Issued by Scottish Widows Investment Management Limited. Regulated by the Financial Investment Authority and HMRC.

There'll be no such  
thing as societies

Bad news: the building society carpetbaggers are back. By Andrew Verity

## BUILDING SOCIETIES UNDER SIEGE

Building Society	Members	Status	Carpetbagging defence
Bradford & Bingley	3 million	Facing vote on April 26	Closed to new accounts
Portman	1.25 million	Testing validity of conversion proposal	Closed to new accounts
Britannia	1.5 million	Testing validity of conversion proposal	New members assign windfall rights to charity
Yorkshire	1 million	Testing validity of conversion proposal	New members assign windfall rights to charity
Coventry	700,000	Proposal rejected: not enough support	New members assign windfall rights to charity
Chelsea	400,000	Testing validity of conversion proposal	Minimum opening balance of £1,000. Branches can halt openings
Shepton	350,000	Testing validity of conversion proposal	Minimum balance of £2,000
Leeds & Holbeck	350,000	Testing validity of conversion proposal	Minimum balance of £1,000

THE FUTURE of Britain's remaining building societies was once again thrown into uncertainty this week when it emerged that carpetbaggers had succeeded in forcing seven societies to consider turning themselves into banks.

Eight of Britain's building societies were sent unwelcome New Year's resolutions, which may have to be taken seriously by the end of April when they will be holding their annual general meetings.

The resolutions, put forward by two carpetbaggers and supported in each case by 50 members of the society, propose that their boards take steps towards converting to plc status, and distributing shares to society members.

Behind seven of these resolutions is a familiar figure: Michael Hardern, former butler, self-appointed "carpetbagger-in-chief", and the man who was twice defeated in attempts to be elected a director of the country's biggest building society, Nationwide.

This year, Mr Hardern is targeting Yorkshire, Portman, Leeds & Holbeck, Chelsea, Shepton, Coventry and Britannia building societies. (Peter Mandelson, the former trade secretary who resigned amid questions about whether he told the full truth in his application for a mortgage with Britannia, could be a beneficiary if shares are distributed.)

In each case, Mr Hardern has attempted to persuade at least 50 members of each society to support his resolution, and also his election to the board as a director. It is already known that he has failed to get enough support at one society, the Coventry, but he is likely to have succeeded at others.

Stephen Major, a plumber working in Lisburn, County Antrim, has gained the support

of 70 members of the Bradford & Bingley. He is thought to have been in contact with Mr Hardern through his website, www.carpetbagger.com, which is also how most of the nominations were obtained.

His resolution is almost identical to Mr Hardern's and his application was submitted at the same time. "The Internet means the flame of Athenian democracy can be rekindled and ignited here in the UK," says Mr Hardern.

Christopher Rodriguez, chief executive of Bradford & Bingley, has, in public at least



rst

# Want to invest? Read all about it

There are plenty of books that will promise to make you rich quick. But which give genuinely valuable investment advice?

tuition fees are our her LEA. Her parents th her living costs. The Alison will be slightly ss she is treated as a uident under the Gov scheme. she will be up to £1,000 annually. tion fees. el impact on Tim and nost severe from Sept. July 2000 when they will both Charlotte, in her Alison, in her first. award maintenance nts but assess parental n next year there could eking LEA assistance ill be two children to residual income' could antly because parents are an allowable de- gross income. and do find themselves, ght to consider using heir bond and/or PEP's. urvice pension conti- are fulfilling a greater d. Tax is a major on h the bond. They need ust how much can be out incurring a higher- liability. nda are also relatively event of a long-term Linda would receive a pay followed by six ay. Tim, on the other ed to three months' h her payments at the cretion. had reached age 30 a good idea to retire. He ok to accumulated cap- incapacity benefit for quality from the state ve is to consider income rance. This would help n's pension. If there is less income protection his employer, Tim r a policy which defers 52 weeks of illness n would charge £7 a week monthly index- of £1,000. nda also need to review hey have the policies rder £100,000 for Tim and- which are not t and could be subject ax. They should ev- the policies subject to nts. Incidentally, cur- nce rates mean that replacement policies 50 per cent of the 20 per cent of Linda's

**R**eaders often ask me where they can go to find a simple introduction to the principles of successful investment - one that gives an all-round picture of the objectives of managing your money, in language that is both concise and simple.

The answer is that it is hard to find such a single-volume book. There are now quite a few excellent books about active stock-picking (which, in truth, is just a small subset of the overall subject of investment) and one or two good ones about financial planning, but nothing that gives what, in days long gone, might have been called something like *The Intelligent Person's Guide to Overall Investment Policy*.

Jim Slater's *Investment Made Easy* is a typically clear and concise read, though again with a slant towards his own speciality of stock-picking. Borneo Cohen's books are also well planned and presented. I must declare an interest in that both

these books are published by my own publishers, Orion. I am also an admirer of Stephen Lofthouse's book, *Flying Your Finances* (published by John Wiley), which is nothing if not comprehensive and clear-headed. FT Pitmans also publishes a series of excellent but quite weighty books on many different aspects of investment.

The one book that I think imparts the most wisdom per page is, however, perhaps inevitably, written by an American, Charles Ellis. If you held me up against a wall and asked me which single book has most to teach the average investor about the business of managing money, I would have to say that it is his book on investment policy. The first edition appeared many years ago but has just been revised for the third time and reissued with new material, under the title of *Winning the Loser's Game*.

In the best sense of the word, the book is a classic and, while directed primarily at a US audience, will

reward anyone in this country just as well. The book is published by McGraw-Hill and can be found in serious bookshops (if you have difficulty finding it, contact the specialist investment publisher, Harriman House, in Petersfield, on 01730 233870, who should be able to find and post you a copy).

What makes *Winning the Loser's Game* so good? Well, part of it, I think, has to do with the fact that the book was originally written for professional investment managers and their employers, such as pension-fund trustees.

Mr Ellis has been an investment consultant for many years, and this book is a serious attempt to sum up the state of the world's knowledge about the practice of successful investment management for those for whom managing money is a mainstream business.

It therefore feels unimpulsive to promise its readers that reading the book will make them rich quickly - something which most publishers



**JONATHAN DAVIES**

*The key to investment success is knowing your own personality*

seem to assume is essential if you are to sell any kind of book about money to the retail market.

Yet the reality, as Charles Ellis demonstrates superbly, is that most of investment is not about making money quickly. It is about making

sensible decisions that will preserve and grow your wealth in real terms over the medium and longer term.

The skill and art of it is as much about avoiding making mistakes or irrational or inconsistent decisions as it is about finding that wonder stock or money-making scheme that is going to transform your fortunes overnight. If your investment strategy consists of putting all your money on the National Lottery, and doing nothing else, then this book is probably not for you.

The book is not long - it runs to barely 140 pages of text, and is liberally sprinkled with illustrations - but it covers all the main aspects of investment in a marvellously concise and clear-cut way. It includes advice on how to set realistic investment objectives, how to think about risk and when and where to seek advice.

If anyone has any doubts about the wisdom of choosing an index fund for at least part of their portfolio, I defy them to retain those

doubts after reading Ellis's masterly discussion of the real nature of stock-market risk. His demonstration of why investment has become a 'loser's game' (a world in which you can prosper only by taking advantage of other people's mistakes, not through your own efforts) reads as powerfully today as it did when it was first published more than 25 years ago.

The key to success is knowing your own personality and shaping your investment decisions to match your needs and temperament. This, he reminds us, is a responsibility that only we ourselves can take on. It cannot be delegated.

But nor need it be an onerous task so long as we arm ourselves with a basic understanding of how and why the investment world works. This is something which, I am glad to see, the Government and the Financial Services Authority are both now trying to spread through various educational initiatives.

If they can do half as well as ex-

plaining what the eternal verities of investment are as Mr Ellis has done in his book, I will be very surprised.

Jonathan Davies is the author of *Money Makers - The Stockmarket Secrets of Britain's Top Ten Professional Investment Managers*, published by Orion Business Books. It is now available in paperback, price £9.99

*'Winning the Loser's Game', normally costing £19.99, is available to readers of The Independent at a special discount price of £14.99 (plus £2 p&p) from Harriman House. Call 01730 233870 or fax 01730 233880 for Visa, Mastercard or Amex orders. Or write to Harriman House Ltd, 43 Chapel Street, Petersfield GU32 3DY. Quote the code number (9397) or the title and mention that you want to take up the Independent Offer. Alternatively, go to the following website: <http://www.globalinvestor.com/bookshop> and type 9397 in the search box*

## LOOSE CHANGE

**FT FUND Managers** is waiving initial charges on lump sum investments into its European and British PEPs. This also applies to transfers from other PEPs. Call 0800 435 810.

**LEGAL & GENERAL**, the insurer, is offering a 2 per cent discount for six months on variable rates paid on its Flexible Reserve mortgages. New customers will pay 4.8 per cent. The current variable rate is 6.8 per cent. Call 0870 0100338.

**ALLIANCE & LEICESTER** is giving away mini-FM radios to customers who open a Cashcard account. The deal is open to young people aged between 11 and 17. Details from any A&L branch.

**MARTIN CURRIE**, fund managers, is launching an offshore fund investing in Japan, taking advantage of that country's perceived recovery. The fund has an initial charge of 3 per cent. Minimum investment is \$5,000. Call 0808 1002125.

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**Chameleon PEP** Both funds invest in a range of Exeter investment trusts. Call 0800 807807.

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**HALIFAX** is offering discounts for existing customers who take out one of its loans. For those with a Halifax mortgage, whose salary is paid into one of the bank's accounts, rates are 12.9 per cent APR. For customers of less than six months' standing, rates are 17.9 per cent.

**JOHN CHARCOL**, mortgage brokers, is offering a fixed mortgage at 5.89 per cent until March 2001. It carries no redemption penalties and has an arrangement fee of £300. Call 0800 718191.

## The Index-Tracking PEP

\*Source: Mifcoral LGIM, on an offer to hold funds based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 (Legal & General since launch to 01.01.99). Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 01.01.99, tax credits on UK dividend distributions will only be able to be claimed by PEPs at a reduced rate of 10%. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. All components of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in unit trusts. Full written details are available on request as at 01.01.99. The Government have announced that contributions can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. From that date a new tax privileged savings vehicle, the Individual Savings Account (ISA) will be available. Legal & General (Direct) Limited, Registered in England No. 2793800. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4A 3DF. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and INRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name

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# What every well dressed home will be wearing in '99

An ice-blue modular lamp? Or an African milking stool in aubergine? Ten design gurus make their predictions



**L**ofty urbanite, cosy homiegirl or hedonistic glamour kitten: whatever you see yourself as, your home is a certain reflection of your character, for better or worse. When it comes to decorating your own space, attempting to keep up with the Hoppens and Hemphels of this world, and the sophisticated lifestyle statements made by sea-grass flooring and delicately positioned lacquerware bowls (so 1998, darling), can be both exhausting and expensive.

In the ruthlessly chic field of interior design, everyone has their own ideas – so why not make 1999 the year to start respecting your home environment and find out whether you're a dedicated minimalist, a sworn magpie or something in between. Who cares that fluffy pink lampshades are out this year? The main thing is to have some fun – either that, or you could play it stylishly safe and follow the advice of the style gurus:

#### Caroline Burstein-Collis

Director, Browns Living  
"Unlike with your clothes, you can't change your home's wardrobe every year, but in 1999 we can afford to loosen up a little. Interiors have recently been very clean and minimal and, although this helps to clear the mind, it would be good to have a little more colour through items such as plants and cushions. Having said this, everyone is different and some people enjoy being surrounded by familiar clutter. The important thing is to make sure you have things in your house that you love."

#### Tom Dixon

Head of design at Habitat  
"The trouble with homes is that you can't really talk in years, as you can with fashion; but there are several trends at the moment. The first is a popularity for modular products – those that you buy several of and stack together yourself: storage, screens, flooring and even lighting. Another trend is for things that are multi-functional. People are constantly bom-

barded with a kind of fantasy world of how to live – but the reality is very different. To be realistic about what their home is like or could be like, people will be choosing items that are essentially practical – steps that fold to become a chair, or loft lamps that can be hooked on to any area of a house.

"I hope that people will feel modern as we approach the millennium. At the turn of the last century the public was apprehensive about the future and tended towards comforting, organic shapes such as those of Art Nouveau. This time people will be more confident and proud of embracing technology with distinctive lighting, hi-fi and cooking gadgets. There may also be a trend for futuristic retro design."

#### Tricia Guild

Head of Designers Guild  
"Natural and interesting textures in white, pale brown and ecru will be balanced with pale iridescent colours of aqua, chalk grey, pale olives and smoky mauve. There will be no frills or clutter but, instead, clear, clean lines together with vivacious images from oriental inspiration."

#### Yoni Rodgers

Editor, 'Elle Decoration'  
"The whole nation has become more home-savvy. First it was sorting out your clothes, then the interior decoration, and in 1999 it will be the turn of the garden. The idea of designing an outdoor room will materialise, with furniture that you can wheel in or out. Attention will be given to sheds, huts and garden hideaways as well as the layout of the lawn. Conversely, nature will extend into the home as people turn back to real fires in the house."

"White will still be the main colour but it will be a soft, new-dawn, spacey kind of white rather than a bleak white. Accessories will still verge on the modern ethnic. Where lots of modern design in shops such as Browns Living and Nicole Fahri takes its inspiration from items such as African milking stools and simplifies this down, in 1999 we will be looking for the real thing."



A clutterless future, top, at Designers Guild (0171-243 7300); tea caddy cum saucer from The Home (01274 530770); textured linen, above, and controversially pale wood, below, from the Conran Collection (0171-399 0710)

#### Sarah Kean

Co-owner, The Cross  
"The theme for this year starts with some fantastic sap-green glassware from Belgium and lots of leaf-inspired plates – tropical leaves, lilies and waterlilies and so on. At the other end there will be lots of pale colours, including leather pouffes in

pretty shades of ice blue, pale eau-de-Nil and off-whites. Into summer, there'll be a permanent holiday feel with deep pink, bright turquoise and canary yellow."

#### Robin and Patricia Silver

Owners, The Home  
"The most important thing this year will be that people are looking for quality and will be willing to pay more for things that are well designed than for things that are a bit junky. Colours will be subdued and solid rather than bright, plasticky and transparent, and dark, grainy wenge-wood – which has a rather African feel to it – will be more popular than sycamore, maple and other paler woods."

"Kitchens will also be prominent in the home. Last year, having watched the River Café cookery programmes, everyone wanted the double-handled mezzanines, but found them difficult to operate. This year there is a new kind that you hold in one hand and, for an inexperienced cook, they are much easier to handle. Since tea is set to overtake coffee in popularity, there will be all kinds of tea-making and tea-drinking equipment in the shops."

#### Rupert Thomas

Deputy editor, 'World of Interiors'  
"1999 will probably see an emphasis on hand-made, individual pieces. As the general public's levels of luxury have increased – everyone can now pop into Debenhams to buy a pashmina shawl – there is no clear definition between the top and the middle of the market, and so the top end is having to distinguish itself by returning to the crafts tradition."

"The fascination with early Modernism will probably continue; but now that you can buy versions of Modernist designs everywhere from IKEA to Viaduct, the theme is less romantic than it was a year ago."

"The main thing is that you should feel relaxed within your home, so have a bit of everything you like in there. The new tendency is for people to raid every century for the best it provided and put all the different pieces together in one house."

#### Rebecca Toone

Accessory buyer, Heal's  
"Whites, greys and creams with accents of darker colours such as aubergine and navy will be the theme for 1999. Texture is still very important, and the use of natural materials – wool, leather, suede, linen, slate and metals. There will be no coloured patterns as such; ceramics will be mostly white with raised designs."

#### Sophie Holloway

Buyer, contemporary furniture, Liberty  
"There is a trend towards all things Scandinavian and Liberty has bought into those countries, renowned for their beauty and creativity. The pieces for 1999 are typically Scandinavian in form, material and craftsmanship, and are both functional and aesthetic. Bought to fulfil the individual's spatial needs, the resulting collection is simple, high quality and natural with a nod to architectural influence."

"I believe there is also a trend for beautifully crafted and individual pieces for the home. This is why Liberty has revived its 'One-Off' department, which opens next month. The idea is that the home is a sanctuary that surrounds us with beautiful objects to inspire and give pleasure to the mind and body."

#### Louise Chidgey

Fabrics buyer, and Jill Webb, furniture buyer, The Conran Shop  
"Colours around the home this year will be aubergine, indigo, Indian red, eggshell and eau-de-Nil, and all fabrics will be textured. Sheer linens and organzas will have fine details within the weave of the fabric rather than patterns."

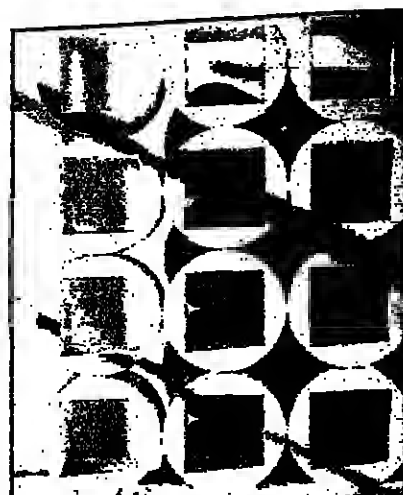
"Over the last two years, furniture trends have swayed towards dark woods but, despite changing trends, The Conran Shop continues to select clean, minimal, high-quality furniture in blond wood with natural finishes."

"The belief here is that we should follow our own line and let other people copy us, rather than the other way round."

REHANNON BATTEN

## SIX OF THE BEST

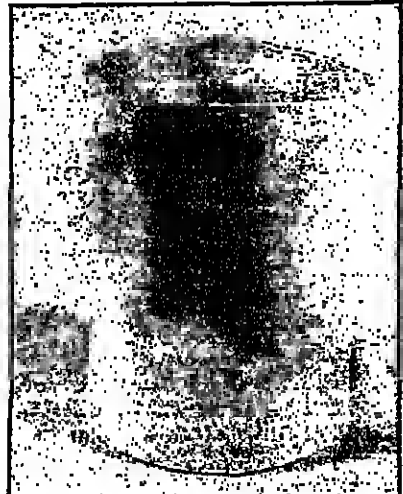
THINGS TO BUY IN 1999



Irkel bookcase by Lloyd Schwann, from £3510, Viaduct (0171-278 8456)



Wood, leather and iron Moroccan bellows, £38.95, Graham & Green (0171-727 4594)



Freeform vase in cream, £26.95, Habitat (0645 334433 for nearest store)



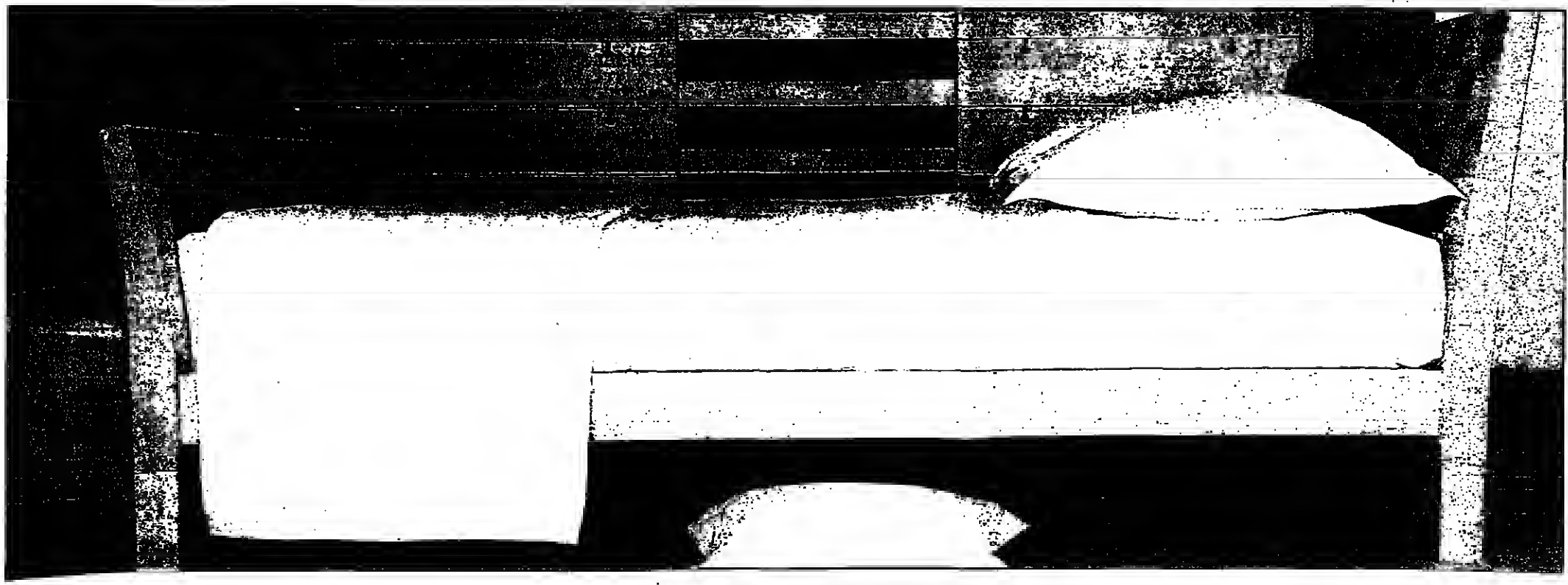
Pallio bed, £599 for 4'6", The Iron Bed Company (01243 778999)



Nem stool in indigo, £39, Habitat (0645 334433 for nearest store)



White linen sheet sets, from £213, the Volga Linen Company at Graham & Green (0171-727 4594)





## I WANT TO OWN... A PERSONAL ORGANISER

# The keys to an organised life

Some people couldn't organise the proverbial piss-up in a brewery. It's this sort of person who makes the inebriated pre-January gesture of resolving to change him- or herself overnight: to fill in the tax form on time, make sure the MOT never lapses, invest profits prudently and pay all bills by direct debit. None of which, if these people are anything like me, they ever get round to doing.

So if you want to get off to the right start but you, too, find yourself scribbling all your January appointments in the small space allocated for 31 December 1998, then you could do worse than consider investing in the following items:

### KEYS ARE GOOD

Name: Psion Series 5  
Price: £370 (or £420 in a Mulberry leather-bound case), from Dixons  
Stockists: 0990 143050

Description: The Psion Series 5 is the best pocket-sized palmtop PC on the market. Not the swiftest in the stockpile - in fact its grey-scale LCD screen makes it look rather antiquated - and it doesn't have the fastest processor, but it is designed with practicality first and gimmicks second. Hence, it's not sold on its ability to cruise the Internet while on a bus to Barnet (who would really want to?), but on its solid personal-organisational capabilities (appointments, phone numbers, expenses), and business applications (spreadsheets, bar charts, sketching). Most important, though, is the fact that you can type on it without your fingers snapping off. Until the next evolutionary step for word processors, when we all speak to machines instead of type on them, a decent keyboard remains the essential element in the man-machine interface, and none of its peers matches the Series 5 for comfort.

The specs: 8Mb Ram; 6Mb Rom; Epoc 32 operating system; spellcheck; thesaurus; calculator; recorder; sketch pad  
Style: ★★

Any others worth considering?

Hewlett Packard's 620LX (£599, 0990 474747). Although it has a less user-friendly keyboard, it does have a brighter, 256-colour screen and a bumper 16Mb memory, and runs Windows CE 2.0, an abridged version of Windows 95 (something you really could cruise the Net with). Psion, meanwhile, has also upgraded its series 3 model, the 3MX, with a faster chip (28MHz rather than its predecessor's 7.6MHz), which retains

at a modest £120. Its plus points are PC/Mac compatibility. The downside is that the keyboard is more fiddly. Equally tiresome on the fingertips, but 10 times more fun, is Sharp's HC4500 (£700, 0800 262958) palmtop PC, another 16Mb machine using the Windows CE 2.0 system. But you'll probably be more interested in the fact that it has a nice colour screen, and for another £350 you can buy a slot-in digital camera.

### PILOTS OF THE FUTURE

Name: 3Com Palm III

Price: £199.99

Stockists: 0880 7311064

Description: The previous small metal packets are basically micro PCs, but you may prefer something that works as an adjunct to your PC, rather than trying to emulate it. For those of you who don't want to write the next *Trainspotting* or *The Horse Whisperer* on the way to work, a keyboard-free PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) may be more useful. 3Com's Palm III is under 5in tall, looks a bit like a *Star Trek* communicator (doesn't everything these days?), can store 6,000 names and addresses and five-years' worth of appointments, and can be written on with a special stylus.

The specs: 2Mb memory; infrared data transfer; PC docking facility.  
Style: ★★

Anything else worth considering? Philips' Nino 300 (£300, 0900 961445) may seem steeply priced for a posh phone/appointments book, but it justifies why it's more expensive than the Palm III by boasting twice its memory, being twice as stylish (a nice, matt silver finish), having a nifty docking bay and being the first PDA to operate using Windows CE. Extra good points include neat short-cut command buttons and Pocket Communicator software that allows you tell the machine to perform certain basic functions. If Darwinian theory can be applied to machines, then it seems likely that the future of digital organisers will be evolving from this particular machine's DNA.

### OLD FAITHFULS

Name: Mulberry Planner

Price: £195

Stockists: 0171-491 3900

Description: If you still wonder why anyone would want an electronic organiser, when it's transparently quicker both to jot down and look up phone numbers and appointments in a book, then look no further than a Mulberry Planner, crafted in crocodile-skinned Congo leather. Some of its nice touches

include inner sleeve credit-card slots and a zip pocket, but it's in the stationary pack that the planner really excels. As well as the usual address and notes, Mulberry has included fact sheets with such essential information as the international dialling code of the United Arab Emirates, the date of the Henley Regatta, and how to start your first wine cellar. It's big, bulky and backbreakingly heavy, but worth the extra effort.

Style: ★★ ★★ (if you liked the Eighties).

Anything else worth considering? Filofax (0990 143702 for mail order) offers everything from restrained traditional to the so-bright-you-need-to-wear-shades contemporary, and in mini, pocket, personal and A5 sizes. The crocodile-skin-styled, black leather Ascot (£69.95 for the personal size) is suitably sombre for business purposes, while those of a more athletic bent may prefer the rubber-spined, zip-locked, vinyl Active organiser (£19.95 for pocket size), which comes in khaki as well as yellow, red and blue options.

### FINISHING TOUCHES

Writing class: a good personal organiser requires an equally good writing implement. The Mont Blanc 14-carat Meisterstück Classique (£165, 0181-232 3000 for stockists) has a streamlined feel and a piston converter to take ink cartridges for those who have never got to grips with inkwells.

### TV quick:

The Casio CMD40 (£60, 0181-450 9131) is the couch potato's ultimate organisational tool, with its infra red remote control to operate your hi-fi, the TV and the VCR.

Digital Post-it note: Always thinking up million-dollar ideas on the bus? Like silly gimmicks? Sony's ICD-V21 (£60, 0990 111999) digital notetaker is for you. Designed like a cartoon bubble, it records up to 99 short messages.

Making light work: Forget fumbling for keys in the dark after you drop them in the car park. Solve the problem with a Hermès credit-card-sized halogen beam, neatly presented in a stitched leathery envelope (£65, call 0171-823 1014 for details).

Credit control: Your wallet has recently taken a battering, so upgrade the thing you keep your cash, receipts and used lottery scratch cards in with a sleek, black executive wallet from Land Rover (£45, stockists 0181-202 5454), designed more like a Chelsea boot than a 4x4's rear end.

SHAUN PHILLIPS  
DEPUTY EDITOR, "ZM"

## CHECK IT OUT

### RADIATORS

WHEN IT comes to radiators you're either an exhibitionist or you're not. The basic design of this heating staple has remained virtually unchanged over the years, but with all the styles, colours and sizes now on the market, you can choose radiators that will demand attention, or fade into the background.

The eye-catching "Hot Springs" radiator from Bisque, inspired by a ring binder, is a continuous steel-tube coil. Made in England, it is one of the Millennium Products selected to be on display in the Millennium Dome, available in three sizes - 0.6m, 1.2m and 1.8m - and 15 colours. Prices start at £350 for the smallest size in white. The design of Bisque's round and chunky "Flowform" radiator is based on traditional industrial heating elements. Stacked circular fins maximise the surface area of the radiator, while ensuring a compact shape overall - perfect for keeping your feet warm. These are available in four lengths from 0.5m to 2m (from £139).

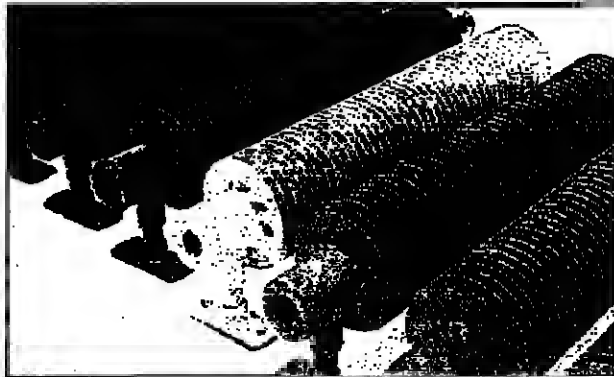
Another new model that is sure to become a design classic is Bisque's "Cobraltherm"

towel radiator. A single tube snakes asymmetrically up the wall, ending in a clever ball finial, perfect for hanging a bathrobe on to warm (from £387). It can be supplied in white, chrome or 1,600 other colours - the entire Dulux range, in fact. It is also available in an electric-only version - useful if you don't have a central heating system.

Faral Radiators' designs are more utilitarian than Bisque's, but extremely practical. Its aluminium radiators are made in sections 80mm wide, allowing incredible flexibility in size.

But, if you're seeking a radiator that will blend seamlessly into its surroundings, then the Hudevad catalogue is inspiring. Flicking through the sleek pages, it feels like playing "hunt the radiator" among the photos of minimalist interiors. To ensure a perfect match with your paintwork, the Hudevad steel radiators are available in any colour produced by a paint manufacturer, or alternatively, ready primed so that you can decorate the radiator in situ.

The simple, flat-fronted "Plan" design cunningly pro-



The industrially-inspired "Flowform" radiator from Bisque

vides high heat levels from a narrow body and is available in eight heights, eight depths and 215 lengths, which can be straight, curved or angled (from £52). Even more discreet, "Symphony" (four heights, 144 lengths, from £43) and "FS" (five heights, 144 lengths, from £32) radiators can be fitted horizontally or vertically and can be supplied with pegs or rails for hanging up towels to dry. A bonus of Hudevad's sleek styling is that these radiators are extremely easy to clean. In a child's room, the robust Low Surface Temperature (LST) flat panel radiators (eight heights, 340 lengths, two depths, from £120 for the outer case) are ideal, as no part of their surface will exceed 43°C.

To replace or reinstate period radiators, "Liberty" column radiators from MHS Radiators are ideal. Cast in original, intricate, Victorian scrolled relief patterns, and supplied in an authentic gun-metal primer finish (from £220), they are compatible with both old and new heating systems.

Alternatively, architectural salvage yards are a good source of reclaimed original cast-iron radiators, but make sure you remember to get them pressure tested before fitting them.

Clyde Combustions' tubular steel and cast-iron radiators and towel rails are classics that have stood the test of time. For their FKR and Windsor radiators a site-painting service is available, but three other styles are available in 33 colours. The "Doric" radiator (from £145) is the perfect choice for simplicity. There are only 10 sizes, and you can have any colour - as long as it's white.

DIONA GREGORY

## SHOPTALK

ANYTHING WITH "try me free" screaming from a packet has to be a good thing and this definitely is.

Throughout January, Maltwell is offering a free 200g or 400g cheddar-style cheese to anyone in the UK. The deal is that you buy the cheese - around £1.29 and £2.49 for the two sizes - from your local supermarket, keep your receipt and the pack's promotional label and then



send them both to the address on the label to have your money refunded by cheque.

Even the most

pernickety cheese buffs who don't like the idea of buying anything less than a slab of real farmhouse cheddar, freshly sliced, from their local cheese specialist, will welcome Maltwell into their fridges. Perfect for melting over toast or reclining atop a Jacob's cracker, Maltwell is really worth a try, and then another - especially since it comes packaged in a useful resealable pack.

## GOOD THING

IF YOU didn't get a pair of Pauline Burrows pyjamas in your Christmas stocking, now is the time to take action and buy yourself some. Made from fine Italian cotton and hand-finished using traditional methods, they are available in white or black and cost £225 a pair - just the thing for lazy weekends. The pyjamas are available on 0171-261 1988.



## MAD THING

TO BE a stylish swigger you need to find your trademark tipple. And it's time to forget the clichéd glamour of champagne, Martini or absinthe and indulge your secret Tia Maria side instead with a bottle of Stone's Cream

Liqueur. Launched last September and based on Stone's Ginger Wine and fresh cream, it costs £11.49 a bottle from all major supermarkets.



Forward planning, clockwise from left: planner, £195, Mulberry (0171-491 3900); Meisterstück Classique pen, £165, Mont Blanc (0181-232 3000 for stockists); 3Com Palm III, £199.99 (0880 7311064 for stockists); black executive wallet, £45, Land Rover (0181-202 5454 for stockists)



## MOTORING

## A marriage made in Motown

The first fruits of the Daimler/Chrysler alliance are on show in Detroit. Gavin Green glimpses the shape of things to come

Detroit has about as much in common with Paris as a derelict car park has with the Louvre. But in the same way that the Paris catwalk is still the world trend-setter for high-street fashion, so Detroit's motor show is the pointer for road vogue. Over the years, the North American International Auto Show, held in Detroit's decayed downtown area, has shown the way ahead for car design more than any other motor show.

And it's at these shows that a series of eye-catching concept cars from Chrysler earn that company the reputation for being the world's most avant-garde street stylist – the Jean-Paul Gaultier or Alexander McQueen of the blacktop.

This year, of course, Chrysler has changed. It is now part of the vast German Daimler concern, even though the Yanks still optimistically talk about Chrysler "merging" with the Germans. To celebrate, one of the star DaimlerChrysler exhibits in Detroit is a Mercedes. The Vision SLR is a concept car, a type of vehicle from which sensible-shoes Mercedes usually shies away, reckoning that it is wiser to spend dough on cars that the punters can currently buy. But the SLR is a high-performance coupe that boasts not only a traditional Mercedes moniker (the SLR was Mercedes' greatest Fifties sports car) but also a traditional Mercedes sports car feature – "gullwing" doors.

It also has a super-powerful 557bhp supercharged V8 engine. It won't go on sale, at least not in this exact guise, but there's a good chance that a Ferrari-busting front-engined Mercedes supercar, bearing more than a passing resemblance to the SLR, will hit the streets in a few years.

Not that Chrysler has rolled over and died in the face of its bigger German brother. It has a raft of intriguing concept vehicles on show, the most outrageous being a vast, 7.2-litre pick-up truck (a breed of vehicle the Yanks love) called the Dodge Power Wagon; while the most visionary was the fuel-cell-powered Jeep Commander, a 4x4 that is as green as the countryside it is designed to churn up. One newcomer definitely scheduled for production is the Chrysler PT Cruiser. Novel rather than impressive, it looks like a cross between a London taxi and a Fifties hotrod, and will be marketed as a stylish, sporty alternative to an estate car. UK sales are likely.

Sensing an opportunity to steal a march from the traditional masters of style, rival US car makers General Motors and Ford put great effort into their catwalk cars. GM, whose stand at Detroit in the past has usually looked more like a used-car lot than a glimpse of the future, had five concept cars. Three were quite daft – including an open-top Buick saloon which, with its parallel roof rails, looked like a mobile handbag. The best



Detroit delights: (clockwise, from top left) the BMW X5, Dodge Power Wagon, Cadillac Evoq and Ford Thunderbird

GM effort, though, was highly impressive. The Cadillac Evoq is the first truly modern and handsome Cadillac-badged vehicle we've seen in decades. It's a two-seater luxury roadster aimed at the Mercedes SL and Jaguar XK8, and will go on sale within two years. It is earmarked for Europe. The Evoq is peppered with technical novelties. One of the cleverest is "Night Vision", which uses an infrared sensor to make objects visible to the driver well beyond the headlamp range: objects are shown on a display screen, with warm things – such as people,

animals and other cars – highlighted. "Night Vision" goes on sale in America, on the Cadillac DeVille saloon, later this year. It is a world first and promises to be a major safety boon.

Ford also breathed new life into a famous old badge – the Ford Thunderbird. Forty years ago, the Thunderbird badge sent young men's testosterone levels soaring. Recent Thunderbirds, on the other hand, have had about as much sex appeal as a trucker's vest.

The new one, previewed at Detroit, has

overtones of the original 1954 Thunderbird yet still looks modern and appealing. It uses the underpinnings of the Jaguar S-type – another part of the Ford family – and also uses the Jaguar's UK-designed V8 engine. It is designed by Ford's new styling boss, J Mays, who also designed the New Beetle, and is scheduled to go on sale in the US late next year. UK sales are almost certain.

For Europeans, though, there was no doubting the production car star. It was the BMW X5 and, as with DaimlerChrysler, it

is another US-German hybrid. Designed and engineered in Munich, it will be built in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It's a 4x4 "sports activity" vehicle and is designed more for motorways than for mud.

BMW's arch rival Mercedes has enjoyed huge sales success with its new M-class 4x4, a result that finally persuaded BMW to put its badge on to an "off-roader". Quite why BMW is doing this, though, is still something of a mystery. After all, BMW owns Land Rover and Range Rover, the kings of the genre, who must wonder just

why BMW needs the X5. It does tend to imply a certain lack of confidence in the British-badged 4x4s. The X5 uses much of the suspension and drive-train hardware earmarked for the next generation Range Rover. Diesel, straight-six and V8 engines are on offer and, aware that 4x4s have a dodgy reputation for safety, the X5 has a modern unitary construction body, strengthened roof pillars and 10 airbags. British sales start in mid-2000 – a few months before the new Range Rover hits the showrooms.

## Like a Range Rover, but with added style

Designed in Germany but built in America, the new 4x4 from Mercedes is good-looking – and less expensive than you'd expect. By Roger Bell



Merc's new 4x4 won't let the grass grow

THERE ARE several unusual things about Merc's new M-class 4x4. For a start, its off-road ability is almost incidental. Everyone knows that butch sports utilities rarely stray from terra firma, so why compromise on-road performance? Mercedes hasn't. Here's an off-roader for the autobahn.

Second, the M-class has style. Gone are the severe military looks of the old G-wagen with which Mercedes fought a losing battle against the Range Rover. Third, it's less expensive than you might expect of a premium vehicle wearing a three-pointed star. Fourth, the quality and finish fall below those expected of a Merc – perhaps because

the M-class is the first passenger car Mercedes has built outside Germany. But to assemble them in Alabama makes sense, given that 60 per cent will be sold in the US, and fewer than a quarter in Europe.

Technically, the ML320 is everything you'd expect – able, refined, sophisticated, comfortable. It's quick, too – though the ML430 V8, coming next spring, will be quicker. M-B's contention that its M-class is car-like to drive and handle as a two-ton off-roader can get irrefutable.

Driving all four wheels through a smooth-changing five-speed automatic gearbox (there's no manual option), the lusty V6 en-

gine gives lively acceleration and effortless cruising. Keep the revs down and quietness is another virtue. There's little evidence of the wallow or agitation that can afflict off-roaders. I didn't much like the dead, mushy steering, but the cornering composure and tenacity are exemplary.

The M320 relies on electronically-governed traction control for off-road grip, which is more than adequate for most owners' needs. So is the articulation of road-biased all-wheel suspension that gives such a smooth ride. There's little to compromise comfort. You sit tall, with a commanding view out, in voluptuous front seats.

Ergonomically, the M320 has one advantage over all other Mercs: there's a separate right-hand stalk for the wipers. And about time, too.

If not the roomiest 4x4, it is hardly spatially challenged. Three in the back is not a squeeze (though five would be with the optional third row of seats). But the big boot's sill – too high for our arthritic Labrador – hampers loading. Nor does the quality of trim and fittings impress for a car likely to cost the thick end of £35,000 with extras. Think of the M320 as a four-wheel drive E-class saloon on stilts and you have its measure. Beware, Range Rover, there's a Merc about.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Make and model: Mercedes-Benz ML320, from £31,190 on the road.  
Engine: 3199cc V6, 16 valves, 218bhp at 5600rpm.  
Transmission: five-speed automatic gearbox (with high and low range), all-wheel drive.  
Performance: top speed 112mph (governed), 0-60mph in 9.2 seconds.

## MOTORING

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## MY WORST CAR

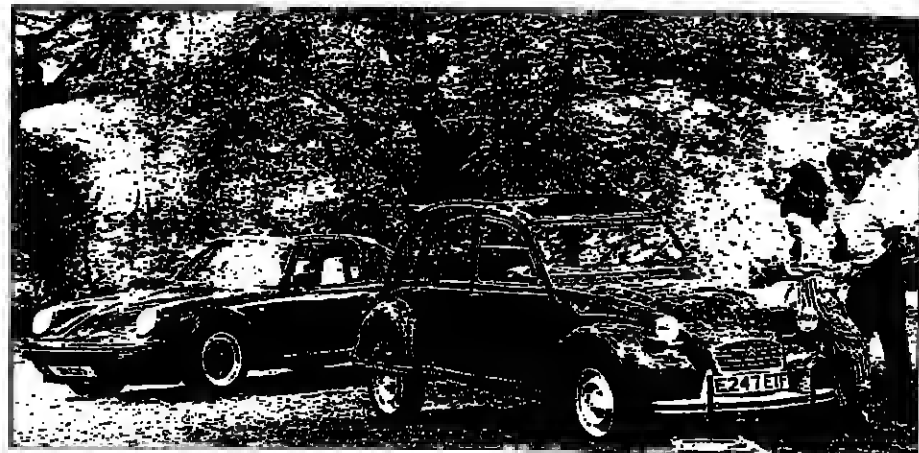
AMANDA GRANT'S CITROEN 2CV

## Truly a meal on wheels

My worst and, strangely, one of my best cars, in which I had lots of adventures, was a bright red Citroen 2CV. I christened it Bertie. I loved him and even had his name spelt out on the boot.

However, we didn't get off to a good start. I bought Bertie for £300 and then popped into a petrol station. But the petrol cap would not come off. A smug driver in a new Mercedes didn't help when he said: "Oi luv, need a tin opener?" I felt dreadful, this was my new pride and joy.

My heart sank even more when I looked at the floor and could see the petrol forecourt below. There were loads of holes I had never spotted. So after finally filling up with petrol, I stopped for a quote for repairs. The mechanic cooed Bertie as a pile of junk. This was the worst car I could have bought, he said. I was close to tears but went for a second opinion, and the next garage didn't think there was a problem.



Amanda Grant's Citroen 2CV was a temperamental, if lovable, beast

After that it was relatively plain sailing thanks to the brilliant suspension – I could drive to shoots without food ending up on the floor. And that food once came in very handy when the police stopped me because I turned without signalling. But they scoffed some of my cakes and let me off with a warning.

However, Bertie let me down on occasions. Once in

thick fog somewhere between Cardiff and Warwickshire he just stopped and stranded me for hours. Theo there were all the rust holes; it was freezing in winter.

Just as bad were the petrol fumes. I had to ban passengers from smoking otherwise it would have been a tin snail flamé.

When I sold it, I thought that the buyer would not get far before coming back

to complain, but I still got more for Bertie than I paid 18 months before – a very handy £350.

And he definitely had a lot left in the tank – my dad spotted Bertie on the road a year later.

Amanda Grant's latest book, "The Cosmopolitan Vegetarian Cook Book", is published by Robson Books at £7.99. She was talking to James Ruppert



Buying property for children at university not only assures them a decent home but is a good investment for you. By Mary Wilson

# Honey, I bought a house for the kids

Every year, parents go through the same trauma - where are their children, who are going off to college or university, going to live?

For their first year of university life, that place will usually be in the halls of residence. After that time, the student is likely to want a little more independence.

Of course, they can rent digs, but these are not cheap - £70 a week on average in London, £30-£40 a week in more rural areas - and often very basic. An alternative option is for parents to buy a property for their child close to their university or college. This can either be used by the child alone, or - if it has enough rooms - let to other students, whose rent can be used to pay off some or all of the mortgage.

But by the time the idea is considered seriously, the second year has started, or is about to start, and it barely seems to make sense to embark on a property purchase with so little time left.

For that reason, if you want to buy now - while your child is still in halls - is the time to do it. Among other things, it is now possible both to compare life in halls with that outside and to have a reasonable idea of the best (and cheapest) areas to live in.

And you don't have to do it on your own. In Bristol, four sets of parents have joined forces to buy a house for their children to live in while at university. Eight friends, who have now finished their first year, got together and decided they were prepared to commit themselves to signing

up for a year's lease. And they hope to stay together until the end of their courses.

Half the number persuaded their parents to go into the joint venture, the other half will be renting their rooms. "It was a nightmare to start with," says Carol and David Bullen, one of the sets of parents buying.

"It took a long time to find the right house, as anything we heard of sold before we got the chance to see it. Then it was very difficult organising the mortgage with four signatures, but we managed it. We hoped to find somewhere back in May but, as it happened, we completed on the property just two weeks before our daughter had to move in."

The syndicate has bought a seven-bedroom house with a small garden, which was in good condition but needed a bit of work doing to it. As the families come from Norwich, Hull, Birmingham and Exeter, a considerable amount of organisation was needed to get the house ready for habitation.

"One of the parents has been doing the plumbing, putting in another bathroom; another helped with the electrics; and we have all mucked in, painting and buying second-hand furniture at auction houses," says Carol.

"We have all got on fine and, after the initial traumas, it really has been quite fun. I am very pleased with the outcome as rents are going up all the time and at least we know our children are living somewhere decent."

She reckons that the rents from the four tenants will pay almost all



David and Carol Bullen at home in the house they and other parents bought for their student children

Chris Jones

the mortgage, with the parents making up a small shortfall. "And if there is only a 2 per cent increase in house prices over two years we will make a small profit when we sell," she says.

Another couple of students, brother and sister Dean and Dhalia Khanna, can thank their parents for giving them the chance to live in a nice flat while they are at university in London. Dean, who is 18 years old, has just started university while Dhalia has up till now lived in halls of residence.

"Our parents have bought us a two-bedroom apartment at Barratt's development in East Harding Street, EC4. It is perfect for us, only

a short distance away from the universities," says Dean. Pemberton House is a conversion of a six-storey, former office building into 39 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

children attend university," says Rowena Wild, managing director of Chestertons Residential. "By running the property as a business, and renting out rooms to other

managing the house to their children as it gives them excellent commercial responsibility and experience."

When the course is finished, the parents hope to have their investment intact, either to continue letting it or to sell. University towns always need homes for their perennially changing students, teachers and ancillary staff, so even if the worst happened and the property market collapsed, there should still be a guaranteed demand for rental accommodation.

"You get a very good return on this sort of property," says James Wilson, a buying agent for Lane Fox. "And the way the market is at the moment, it is unlikely to rise much

in the next six months. It is a very good opportunity to buy for investment purposes."

And should you decide to run the property as a business, then the ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents) Buy-to-Let scheme is available, which makes it far easier for individuals to buy property for investment purposes. The scheme is just into its third year and, over the last two years, more than 13,000 Buy-to-Let mortgages have been arranged.

Chestertons Residential, 0171-262 5060; Lane Fox, 0171-499 4765; sales office at Pemberton House, 0171-583 2237; ARLA hotline, 01223 896555

*'Parents like to hand the running of the house over to the children. It gives them excellent commercial responsibility and experience'*

Prices range from £275,000 to a penthouse at £420,000.

"There has definitely been an increase in parents buying large houses in the towns in which their

students, accommodation costs can be kept to a minimum and the 'business' can even show a profit.

"Parents often like to hand the responsibility for running and

## Architect's brownfield of dreams

The house that John built is a shining example of how derelict land can be exploited. By Martin Thompson

IMAGINE A rectangular bunk of Cheddar with one corner pared off. That's the best way to describe the awkward end-of-garden plot that John Hart discovered tucked behind the university boatsheds on the River Cam.

In this narrow space, measuring a mere 150 square metres, this imaginative Cambridge architect has designed and built for his own use a spacious two-bedroom house with garden and garage.

With its low hanging eaves, courtyard garden and fulsome use of warm materials, such as honey-coloured brick and European redwood, the Hart house combines a Japanese feel with that of an English medieval building. By taking advantage of every available inch in a highly imaginative way, it inspires new standards in urban housing. And all for around £30,000, excluding the cost of land.

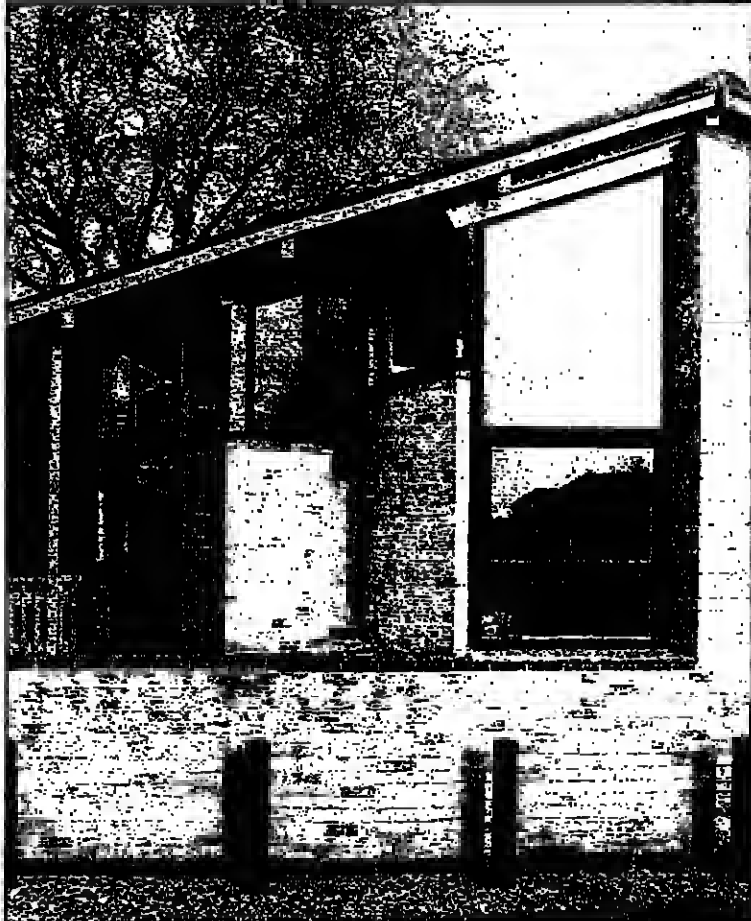
For Mr Hart, the culmination of years of ingenuity and hard slog came in September 1998 when the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) gave the house one of its prestigious Architects Awards - a well deserved pat on the back, not only for its space-defying design but also for the quality of craftsmanship.

The wood finish throughout is so good that you can't help stroking it. Mr Hart's previous home was a 14th-century timbered house in Suffolk, and he acknowledges vernacular influences like exposed roof beams. None the less, his creation by the Cam is resolutely modern in its approach to layout - to quote the RIBA prize jury: "For such a small building, the house has an interior of surprising generosity."

If anything, this is an understatement. Modest in scale it may appear from the outside, but inside the effect produces a gasp of amazement.

The house itself occupies just 80 square metres, and to avoid dead corridor space Mr Hart has all but banished interior walls. Yet open plan turns out to be as open as you want it to be. Despite being open to the rafters, the house feels cosy throughout. By clever use of Japanese-style screens and room dividers doubling as storage systems, he has created spacious yet intimate living areas that flow into one another.

The sleek practical kitchen cleverly colonises the thin end of the wedge-shaped frontage, and the bedrooms occupy the back of the house, which



Apparently modest in scale from the outside, the effect inside produces a gasp of amazement

is at a higher level than the living spaces to give a greater sense of privacy and calm. The house is exceptionally light and airy, itself a triumph in the face of adversity.

To squeeze every inch out of the site, Mr Hart needed to build right up to the boundary walls. Neighbours did not want their gardens overlooked, so getting daylight to the interior became his greatest challenge.

While free to put in sliding glass doors linking the interior to the terrace and garden, his solution elsewhere was to install narrow bands of glazing running along between the eaves and the tops of the outside walls. Known as clerestory glazing, this throws light up into the roof void and on a sunny day allows shafts of light to move steadily through the interior turning it into an impromptu sundial.

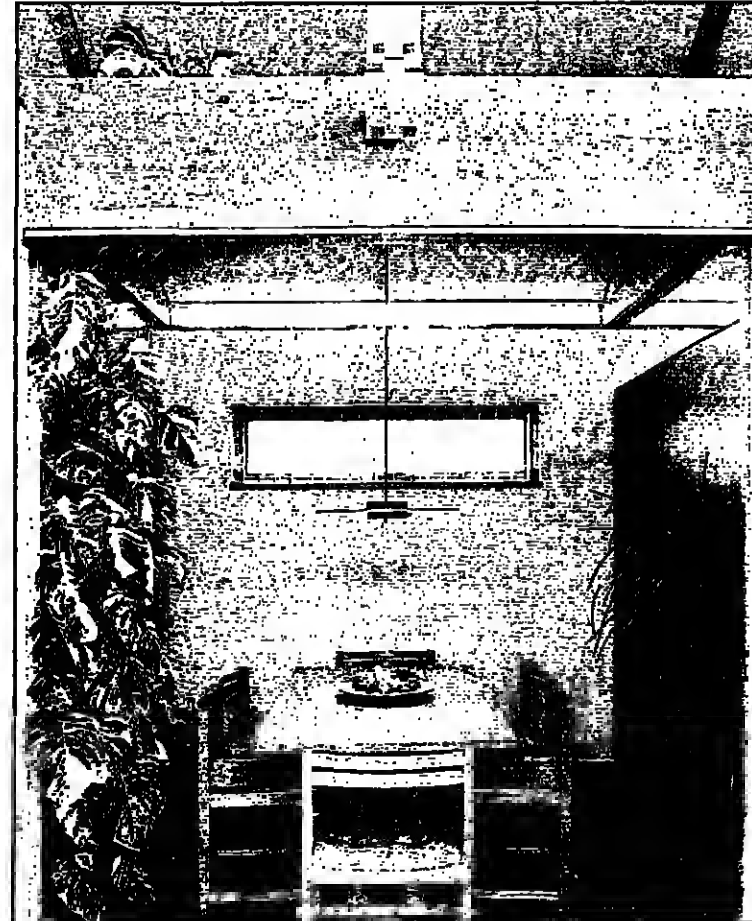
Mr Hart was equally determined

that the house should remain private. To make the most of the river view without being overlooked by passers-by, he raised the floor level by half a metre so that you gaze over the heads of even the loftiest rowing blues.

All the more remarkable is the fact that Mr Hart constructed the house virtually single-handed. He has built traditional wooden boats, but when it came to house-building he admits to having been a novice.

It was not supposed to happen like this. The search for a house in central Cambridge produced nothing but despair and Mr Hart found himself looking for that rarity, a well-situated brownfield site on which to have a house constructed to his own design.

He planned to carry on working while project managing his own site. However, some builders that he had hired failed to live up to his exacting



John Hart

standards. They were firmly shown the door, and Mr Hart picked up where they left off.

But a diplomatic mission had to precede the elbow grease. Aware that two planning applications for the site had already failed, he went knocking on neighbours' doors. He presented them with two scale models, one of the dilapidated corrugated-iron repair shop that presently filled the site and the other of the proposed new house.

Which would they rather have? The neighbours were speedily won over, and what looked like the final hurdle - permission to run drains over adjoining private land - was overcome. However, at the 13th hour, neighbours (who have since moved) raised further objections.

For the while year it took to conclude negotiations, Mr Hart worked on excavating a cellar Wooden Horse style,

inside the existing structure. Once the derelict shed had been demolished, the project finally had lift-off. At first it was weekend working only but John eventually took the plunge and forsook architectural practice to labour day-in day-out on the house for 18 months. Five years slipped by from the time the site was bought to when the project was completed.

The marathon has paid off. The Hart house in Cambridge stands as a shining example of ingenious, accessible design. The current crusade is to make use of every scrap of urban brownfield land to build more homes. If only Mr Hart's contemporary haven could be cloned throughout our inner cities, people would be deserting the suburbs in droves.

John Hart, chartered architect, can be contacted on 01223 364000

## STEPPING STONES

ONE FAMILY'S PROPERTY STORY



DESIGNER CAROLINE Scott and charity director Carl Poll have bought three properties since 1985. They now live in a Victorian house in Telegraph Hill, south London with their sons Freddie and Billy.

Carl first considered buying back in 1977 while living in Edinburgh: "A studio flat was £750 and a two-bed flat £1,200, sums which were too small to be mortgageable. I considered borrowing from my mum but went to Paris instead."

The Eighties saw Carl living in a Peckham council flat and still reluctant to buy: "I fancied a more Bohemian lifestyle."

Eventually he tired of "putting money into renting" and felt he should take the plunge. Scouring south-east London, he found that the price of a two-bedroom flat in Brixton would buy a whole house in less popular Brockley: "I wanted enough room for someone to live in and help pay the mortgage."

In 1985 Carl bought a three-bedroom Victorian terraced house for £39,000. Carl's partner, Caroline, was then living in short-life property, but the frenzy of increasing prices prompted her also to get a foot on the property ladder. In 1987, she moved in with Carl and together with her mother paid £86,500 for a terraced house in Crofton Park which she rented out and believed was a good investment: "By completion it was worth

£78,000. I should probably have sold then."

After 10 years in Brockley, Freddie's birth prompted them to buy somewhere together and end the complication of running two households.

In 1995 they sold both properties. Crofton Park's value had slipped to £60,000 and the Brockley house, valued in 1989 at £100,000, sold for £75,000. Selling in a slump meant modest profits but the large, and previously unaffordable, houses they had always coveted in Telegraph Hill were now within reach. They paid £90,000 for a three-storey Victorian terraced house and estimate they have spent £35,000 on restoration.

Roger Grover, of Halifax Property Services, says: "Telegraph Hill is the best part of New Cross. It's 15 minutes into the City."

GINETTA VEDRICKAS

Those moves in brief...

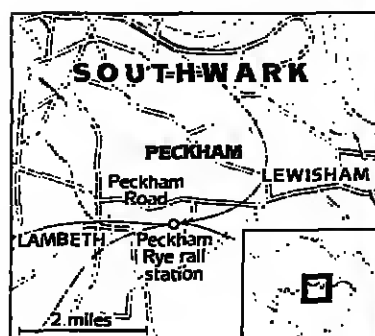
1985 - bought Brockley terrace for £39,000, sold for £75,000.

1987 - bought Crofton Park house for £86,500, sold for £60,000.

1995 - bought three-storey house in Telegraph Hill for £90,000 now worth £220,000.

If you would like your moves to be featured, write to: Nic Cicutt, Stepping Stones, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. £100 will be awarded for the best story



HOT SPOT  
PECKHAM, SOUTH LONDONIdeal for social climbers  
with a touch of vertigo

**G**entrification comes in different guises, stages and degrees. Peckham has already been discovered, so rock-bottom property prices have come and gone. But Peckham's progress has been tepid. Unlike Notting Hill or Islington, where prices have stratospherically soared, this once notorious district is still affordable.

The standard London A-Z tells interesting tales. The black lines that symbolise railway routes are thick as they depart London Bridge, but, as they thin out into various branch lines, they seem to bypass Peckham. Actually, the lines curl around and under Peckham, which in its southern reaches is rich in rail service.

Closer scrutiny shows that some streets are packed together and cluttered, but many are fairly wide apart. PhDs in A-Zs know that houses here will have large gardens and the zig-zag roads among them will be quiet.

Marc Wiehe, of estate agents Winkworth, lives as well as works in the area, which, he admits, was unsalubrious a few years ago. "The demographics are constantly changing. Peckham used to be known for crime, now it is wall-to-wall Volvos. My wife and I personally experienced more crime when we lived in Kensington."

He notes that Peckham's housing stock is good and that properties even in conservation areas are not that dear. "Rents have gone through the roof. Many people in negative equity cashed in when prices rose, chucked out their tenants and sold. Fewer flats were available to rent, so prices went up sharply," says Mr Wiehe.

For singles with really tight budgets, inexpensive ex-council flats are



Not such a bad area after all... Cliffton Crescent, off Asylum Road

Phil Meach

available. For families concerned about space and schools, large houses are available for under £200,000 near the good schools that serve the area.

South Peckham has improved substantially and "is now almost indistinguishable from East Dulwich", says Mr Wiehe. "Prices on some of these roads went through the roof, but many houses are still available at prices which are good value."

North Peckham is slowly changing as tower blocks are replaced with more attractive housing, much of it council or housing-association controlled, and some of it privately held.

Another local estate agent, Stephen Smith of Bushells, notes that "outsiders tend to think that Peckham is not a good area to live in. But once they move in they stay. When they have to move, they don't leave the area. They move up within Peckham itself."

ROBERT LIEBMAN

## THE LOW-DOWN

**Prices:** Three-bedroom houses in good condition on or near Asylum Road are available for £110-£115,000, says Stephen Smith, of Bushells. For good value, look at Oglander, Nutbrook and Maxted roads. Fairclough is selling new one-, two- and three-bedroom flats at prices up to £83,250.

**Transport:** Peckham straddles zones 2 and 3. No tube, but Peckham Rye overground serves Blackfriars and London Bridge. Buses are good, especially the No 12 to Piccadilly and Oxford Street. Council tax: In Southwark, Band A is £524, Band H is £1,573. Home/office: Some attractively

priced shops with flats above are available. Mr Smith says: "If they are on secondary parades, you can generally get change of use for residential or home/office." As the area gentrifies, the number of empty shops should decline. **Peckham Partnership:** With other interest parties, the council has reached the halfway point in a project to have 3,000 homes demolished and 2,000 new ones built by 2002. Of the new units, 60 per cent will be council owned, 20 per cent housing association, and 20 per cent for sale. "Our aim in part is to reduce housing density," says a council spokesperson.

**Peckham Pulse:** One of the partnership schemes, the Pulse is a complex including swimming and hydrotherapy pools, two aerobics studios, a soft play area and separate health and fitness suites. Other council projects include a modern library with media centre and a comprehensive programme to combat crime. **Peckham parks with ponds:** The area is well served by Burgess Park in the north and Peckham Rye Common in the south. Estate agents: Bushells (0181-299 1722); Winkworth (0181-299 2722); Fairclough (0171-358 9816).

THREE TO VIEW  
NEW HOMES. BUT WITH A TWIST

**WALNUT TREE** Cottage, on the edge of Great Sailing, in north-west Essex, was built just four years ago in the traditional style of the area. The four-bedroom house has a small annexe, with a shower-room and playroom or office above the garage, and stands in about a third of an acre of gardens.

It looks full of old-fashioned character, with exposed timbers and a polished oak strip floor in the reception hall, but it has a 15ft kitchen with gleaming Siemens oven, hob integrated fridge, freezer and dishwasher and lined oak units with Provencal blue tiled worktops.

There's also a 22ft drawing-room with a massive fireplace of exposed herringbone bricks and a heavy oak beam supporting the chimney breast. Price £270,000; details from Trembath Welch 01371 872117



**HIGHWINDS**, on the edge of Tavistock, looks as though it's been rooted in the moorland in Devon for more than a hundred years. However, the three-bedroom property was designed by a local architect and built less than 10 years ago.

With views over the town and the Tamar Valley, it has solid stone facing and Delabole slate windowsills.

On the ground floor, there is a dining hall with a Victorian open fire and a maple wood floor, a drawing-room with French doors to the garden and a large kitchen/breakfast-room with fitted American oak units.

The bedrooms lead from the galleried landing on the first floor, and the lower ground floor is a playroom and utility-room. Price £195,000; details from Mansbridge & Balmert 01822 612945



**THIS ARCHITECT** designed house in the centre of Ynys Mon, three miles from Llangefni, in Anglesey, was built specially to blend in with surrounding older properties.

The entrance hall has a vaulted ceiling and facing brick on one wall. The 19ft drawing-room is paneled in oak and has a period cast-iron fireplace with double doors leading to the conservatory. The kitchen has been divided by a peninsula unit into living and cooking areas and includes a full-height fireplace and built-in pine cupboards. Upstairs there are four bedrooms and a bathroom and shower-room. Price £125,000; details from Dafydd Hardy 01248 371212.



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